





T H E  
Lawfulness and Duty  
O F  
SEPARATION  
F R O M

*Corrupt Ministers and Churches*  
Explained and Vindicated.

Written by the  
REVEREND and LEARNED  
Mr. JAMES FRASER of *Brae*,  
Late Minister of the Gospel at *Culross*.

Against the *sinful Compliances* of his Day;  
And now published  
Against the *sinful Compliances* of our's.

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Printed from his own original Manuscript.

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*Acts xix. 9. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake Evil of that Way before the Multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples.*

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## *Advertisement.*

**A**T George Paton's Shop in Linlithgow, is to be sold, a Collection of several remarkable and valuable *Sermons, Speeches and Exhortations*, at renewing and subscribing the *National Covenant of Scotland*, and at the entering into and subscribing the *Solemn League and Covenant* of the three Kingdoms of *Scotland, England and Ireland*; wherein the Nature, Necessity and Excellency of the Duty of Covenanting, with the Evil and Danger of Apostasy, are clearly and convincingly held forth from the Word of God. By several reverend, learned and pious Divines of that Period.

Which, upon reading and serious Consideration thereof, will be found to be most useful, necessary and advantageous, for affording *Light* anent the present Duty of these Lands, their entering into and renewing their solemn Engagements to the most high GOD, and for carrying on a Work of *Reformation* in this present Period.

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T H E  
P R E F A C E  
T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

READER,

**T**HE Reverend Mr. *James Frazer*, the Author of the ensuing Treatise, was famous and remarkable in his Days; and his other Writings, particularly his *Memoirs*, published *anno* 1738. continue to speak out what he was: Wherefore it does not seem needful to insist upon his *Character* here.

This Book is faithfully printed from a Manuscript, which is known and has been attested to be Mr. *Frazer's* Hand-Writing. And, in regard the Ministers of the *Associate Presbytery* are now exposed to almost every Body's ill Nature and Jealousy, so that such as shall not relish this Performance, and yet care not for attacking the Author, may possibly charge some of them with vitiating the same; the Publisher, therefore, thinks it not improper to signify, that none of them are concerned in the Publication thereof, nor in the least accountable for any Sentence of it.

The Author's Manuscript is intitled, 'An Enquiry into that so much debated Case, viz. Whether

Whether it be the Duty of the Lord's People in *Britain* and *Ireland*, to hear such as have submitted to the *Prelatical Government*, or to join with them while in the Exercise of such Acts as do belong to their *pastoral Office*. But as the Argument, therein managed, is, in itself, evidently of a larger Extent than the particular Case of *Prelacy*; therefore the Publisher hath used the Freedom to prefix the general Title which it now bears.

Tho' this Treatise is particularly levelled against Compliance with *Prelacy*, and Communion with *Prelaticks*, yet the Publication thereof, at this Time, is reckoned highly suitable unto our present Situation and Controversy in *Scotland*: For as the fond Reception, which Mr. *George Whitefield*, a Priest of the *Church of England*, and his *latitudinarian Scheme*, have met with, do plainly call us to Arms against an Invasion of *Prelacy*; so the Arguments here pled are plainly applicable unto, and of equal Force against the sinful Compliances of our Day, with the Defections of the established *Church of Scotland*, and Communion with the *Judicatories* thereof, with whom Communion is now impracticable, without Involvement in that Current of *Apostasy* wherewith they are all carried down.

Mr. *Currie* is the most barefaced and busy Advocate that has appeared in Defence of Communion with the established Church; and he hath collected the most of what has been, or, I suppose, can be advanced upon that desperate Cause. The ensuing Treatise contains a very suitable Reply to him, in regard the Arguments which were used by the *Prelaticks*, against Secession from them, and which are here sufficiently refuted, are generally the same with what Mr. *Currie* uses against Secession from the established Church; and the Answers here given unto *Prelaticks*, are as valid against him in the Cause he manages.

That

That Mr. Currie homologates with the *Curates* in his Arguments against the present Secession, will appear, if we consider that,

1. Mr. Currie has adduced *Matth* xxiii. 1, 2, 3. as an Argument against Secession from the present established Church, *Essay*, P. 41. *Conferences*, P. 9, 102, 185. So did the *Curates* of old against Secession from *Prelacy*, as is evident from the following Book, Chap. IV. Sect. 1. P. 166, &c.

2. Mr. Currie makes Use of *Phil*. i. 18. as an Argument against Separation from the present Church, *Conf*. P. 59. So did the old *Curates*, in their own Behalf, Chap. IV. Sect. 2. P. 181, &c. of the following Treatise.

3. Mr. Currie makes Use of *1 Sam*. ii. 35. against Separation from the present Church, *Essay*, P. 122. *Conf*. P. 174. So did the *Curates*, Chap. IV. Sect. 3. P. 185, &c.

4. Mr. Currie makes Use of *Matth*. viii. 4. in behalf of the present Church, *Essay*, P. 41. *Vindication*, P. 180. *Conf*. P. 185. So did the *Curates*, Chap. IV. Sect. 4. P. 186, &c.

5. Mr. Currie makes Use of the Argument drawn from the Communion that the Lord's People kept with the *Jewish Church*, which was guilty of many and gross Backslidings, to condemn Separation from the present Church, *Essay*, P. 40, 41, 50, 57, 64, 145, 163, 176. *Vind*. P. 141, 142, 145, 158, 166, 180, 181, 185, 353. *Conf*. *Pref*. P. 5. *Conf*. P. 9, 20, 21, 22, 106, 166, 210. So did the old *Curates*, Chap. IV. Sect. 5. P. 189, &c.

6. Mr. Currie has made Use of an Argument, drawn from the Practice of the Christian Churches mentioned in the New Testament, in which many Corruptions prevailed, to condemn Separation from the present Church; *Essay*, *Pref*. P. 4, 12. *Essay*, P. 1, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 26, 42, 59, 123, 153, 154,

154, 176. *Conf. Pref.* P. 5, 8. *Conf.* P. 7, 28, 166, 210. So did the *Curates* to condemn Separation from *Prelacy*, Chap. IV. Sect. 6. P. 194, &c.

7. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of the Argument drawn from the Evil of Separation, *Essay*, P. 214 — 224. and in almost every Page of his Writings on this Subject. So did the *Curates*, Chap. IV. Sect. 7. P. 196, &c.

8. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of an Argument drawn from the Contempt of Ordinances, *New Test.* P. 45. and all his Writings on this Subject. So did the *Curates*, Chap. IV. Sect. 8. P. 204.

9. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of our Predecessors Conduct, with reference to *Prelacy*, in the Period before 1638. *Essay*, P. 12 — 16. *Conf.* P. 21, 106, 154, 155, 156, 157, 202, 203. So did the *Curates*, Chap. IV. Sect. 9. P. 207, &c.

10. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of an Argument drawn from some worthy and godly Men who were *Prelatick* in their Judgment, such as *Ridley*, *Cranmer*, *Hooper*, *Hall*, &c. to vindicate keeping Communion with Mr. *Whitefield*, *Conf.* P. 95. The *Curates* did the same, Chap. II. Sect. 1. P. 18.

11. Mr. *Currie* has, in the most impudent and daring Manner, poured out Floods of Taunts, Mocks and Reproaches upon our *solemn Covenants*, and the glorious Work of *Reformation*, *Essay, Pref.* P. 6, 7. *Essay*, P. 20, 21, 27, 32, 33, 34. 93; 127, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185. So did the *Curates* of old, Chap. II. Sect. 6. P. 80.

12. Mr. *Currie* has pled for unlimited Subjection to the unlawful and iniquous Sentences of Church-Judicatories, *Essay*, P. 95, 96. *Vind.* P. 106, 107. *Conf.* P. 120 — 135. So did the *Curates* of old, Chap. III. Sect. 3. P. 115.

13. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of an Argument drawn from the Ravens feeding the Prophet *Elijah*, to justify the keeping Communion with the corrupt  
Ministers



Ministers of this Church, *Conf.* P. 185. So did the *Curates*, Chap. III. Sect. 4. P. 122.

14. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of an Argument drawn from good Men hearing the *Independents*, to vindicate joining with Mr. *Whitefield*, *Conf.* P. 95. So did the *Curates*, Chap. III. Sect. 9. P. 161, &c.

15. Mr. *Currie* has brought in the Separation of the *Donatists*, to condemn Separation from this Church, *Essay*, P. 124. *Conf.* P. 176, 184, 207. So did the *Curates*, Chap. III. Sect. 7. P. 143.

16. Mr. *Currie* has stretched his Wit to the utmost in reproaching and discrediting our *solemn Covenants*, and impugning their Obligation upon Posterity, tho' in a very secret and sly Way, *Essay*, P. 61, 101, 102, 111, 185, 202. *Conf.* P. 95. So did the *Curates* of old, Chap. III. Sect. 9. P. 154.

17. Mr. *Currie* has brought in the Separation of the *Brownists* and *Separatists*, to condemn Separation from the present Church, *Conf.* P. 171, 174. So did the *Curates* of old, Chap. IV. Sect. 7. P. 202.

18. Mr. *Currie* has made Use of an Argument drawn from former godly Writers against Separation, to condemn Separation from the present Church, as is evident from almost every Page of his Writings on this Subject. So did the *Curates* of old, Chap. IV. Sect. 7. P. 203. In Mr. *Currie's* Writings, all that ever wrote upon Separation are quoted with very high Encomiums, tho' the Passages of their Writings, which, for most part, are unfairly cited, bear not the smallest Reference to this Subject. And to gain Credit to his Quotations, and amuse the simple Readers, he calls his Authors *holy, eminent and learned, and great Men in their Day*. Some have compared his Writings to the Jack-Daw mentioned in *Phædrus's* Fables, which, for Ornament and Beauty, dressed itself with the Feathers of a Peacock; and which was justly stripped of its borrowed Plumes, and hissed at by the Peacocks.: So, say they,

they, should Mr. *Currie's* Writings be hissed at, and stripped of their borrowed Finery.

Thus it evidently appears that Mr. *Currie* homologates with the *Curates*, in his Arguments against Separation from this Church. All which Arguments Mr. *Frazer* has solidly and judiciously answered. And it looks too like as if he were also pretty far gone into Uniformity with them in Principle and Judgment, as will clearly appear to every unprejudiced Person, if he considers what high Encomiums he passes upon *Prelatick* Ministers, such as *Cranmer, Hall, &c.* and such as in the Days of Queen *Elisabeth* did not separate from the *English* Church, whom he compliments with the Epithets of *holy, reverend and learned, Conf. P. 51, 52.* Particularly this will clearly appear from what he has advanced anent one *Penry* a *Separatist* in the Time of Queen *Elisabeth, Conf. P. 210.* of whom he says, 'That he, when he came to die, lamented, saying, He deserved Death, for that he had seduced many to a Separation from hearing the *Word of Life* in the Parish-Churches; which, though he himself had learned to discover the Evil of it, yet he could never prevail to recover divers whom he had seduced; and therefore the *Blood of their Souls* was justly required at his Hands.' And he says, *Conf. P. 209.* to the *Seceder*, 'It might be to your Profit to consider this *very remarkable* Passage.' Which is a very bright Evidence of Mr. *Currie's* being *Prelatick* in his Judgment. This also appears from his keeping Communion with Mr. *Whitefield*, a Priest of the *English* Church, and spending a whole Section in his *Conferences* to justify keeping Communion with him, *viz. Sect. 3. P. 94—99.* yea, from the Consideration of this, and other Passages in his Writings to this Purpose, some Ministers of the established Church have given it as their Judgment, that Mr. *Currie* is evidently *Prelatick* in his Principles.

It is pretty well known, to many, that Mr. Currie has left no Stone unturned to procure Arguments against the *Secession*, the mighty Eye-Sore of all Malignants; and, to confirm this, some Years ago, when he was writing one of his Books against the Brethren, he was so barefaced, as to go once and again to Bishop *Freebairn*, as he was commonly called, for some of their *Prelatick* Records and Writings, in order to assist him in managing his Cause against the *Seceding Ministers*, which farther confirms, that Mr. Currie is *Prelatick* in his Judgment and Principles, as above asserted. If Mr. Currie shall have the Assurance to deny this, the Publisher undertakes to prove the Truth of the same.

Mr. Currie is also evidently *Erastian* in his Judgment, as will appear to such as consider, that he has written vigorously in Defence of observing *Fasts* appointed by civil Authority, without the Concurrence of the Church, when Access may be had thereto in her constitute State, *Conf. P. 63—75*. As also, this will appear from his writing in Defence of the Ministers who took the *Abjuration-Oath*, and read the Act of Parliament anent *Porteous*; all which are evidently *Erastian* Encroachments.

Again, Mr. Currie is evidently for passive Obedience and Non-resistance unto the Sentences of Church-Judicatories. He is for giving a blind and unlimited Obedience to all the iniquous Sentences of the Judicatures of this Church. This is evident from his writing in Defence of the Sentence of Deposition that was passed by the Assembly 1740. against the seceding Ministers, *Conf. II. P. 37—62*. In which tho' he endeavours artfully to conceal his own Sentiments; yet it is evident, that he heartily approves of that Sentence, and rakes together all the Arguments that can be advanced in Vindication of the same: And he has the Assurance to argue in Defence thereof, from the holy Scriptures, our Confession of Faith, and our  
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other

other Standards. But there is one Passage of our Confession of Faith that destroys all his Arguments, and shews that the said Sentence is no more binding, than if it had never been passed, and fully vindicates the said Ministers for disregarding it, *Conf. Chap. xxxi. Sect. 3.* Where speaking of the Sentences and Determinations of Church-Judicatories, it is said, ‘ Which Decrees and Determinations, ‘ if (*N. B.*) consonant to the Word of God, are to ‘ be received with Reverence and Submission.’ Where it is asserted, That, when the Sentences of a Judicatory are consonant or agreeable to the Word of God, they are to be obeyed; but, when they are otherways, as in the present Case, they are not to be regarded. Which is both a *Presbyterian* and *Protestant* Principle. For, if an unlimited Subjection is to be given to iniquous Sentences, then must Ministers be intirely at the Devotion of the Church, and contradict their Duty to God, to themselves, and to the Souls of Men, if Judicatories oppose it. But this Principle has been, to very good Purpose, vindicated and defended by the seceding Ministers, in their *Review of the Commission’s Narrative*, from Page 48 to 62. where they have clearly proven, That when Sentences are passed by *Ecclesiastical Courts*, which prejudge the publick Cause of God, and a Testimony for Truth, that, in this Case, Obedience to such Sentences, or a silent Submission unto them, is a Departing from a Testimony for Truth, and a Giving-up with the Cause of God. And Mr. *Wilson*, both in his *Defence* and *Continuation*, hath fully vindicated the said Principle from all the Exceptions laid against it by Mr. *Currie*.

Again, Mr. *Currie* is *latitudinarian* in his Principles, as is abundantly evident from all his Writings in Defence of the present Judicatories; and particularly from what he has advanced anent Mr. *Whitefield*, in his *Conferences*, from Page 94 to 99. and

and what he has said anent the Work at *Cambuslang, Kilsyth, &c.* in his *New Testimony*. From these it appears, that Mr. *Currie* is for an almost boundless Toleration.

In the following Treatise, which is levelled mainly against *Prelacy*, all the Arguments that the *Curates* then adduced in their own Favours, are solidly and judiciously answered. And we have found that the Agents for the present Church have defended themselves and her with the very same Weapons: So that, *mutatis mutandis*, this Treatise is designed for overturning any Arguments this Church can advance in her own Behalf, and for confirming all honest *Seceders* in their *Secession* from her. And whereas we find, that, in this Performance, the *Curates* are charged with great Wickedness, Scandals and Errors, and the Author's Arguments, for Separation from them, are in so far founded on these; and so some may be ready to object, that such Wickedness, Scandals and Errors cannot be laid to the Charge of the present Church: Therefore, to accommodate this Treatise to our present Circumstances, I shall attempt to prove that Wickedness, Scandals and gross Errors are rampant in the present Church, of a worse Nature, and attended with more aggravating Circumstances, than the Scandals or Errors the *Curates* were charged with. And, if this once be made appear, it will be obvious to every body, that this Treatise is as applicable to the present Time, as tho' it had been written with an express Design against the present Church. And,

I. This Church, and the far greatest Part of her Members, are chargeable with the Sin of burying and sopiting our Solemn Covenants, and tolerating such as have impugned their Obligation upon Posterity. It is evident, that this Church hath never, in express Terms, owned the Obligation of these Covenants,

nants, or in the least endeavoured to make the Generation sensible of their heinous Breaches of the same: Yea, have they not, on the contrary, turned the sharpest Edge of their Resentment and Wrath against all such as have owned them, and that Reformation we are bound unto by them? This is a Scandal that is obstinately persisted in.

2. This Church is lying under the Scandal of 'disregarding and burying in Silence our covenanted Reformation attained to, betwixt the Years 1638 and 1650.

3. Are they not under the Scandal of persisting wilfully and obstinately in a Course of Defection and Apostasy from the Lord, in Spite of all reclaiming Means?

4. Are they not under the Scandal of violating their national Faith to God, in our Solemn League and Covenant, by going into the incorporating Union with *England*, and accepting Establishment of this Church, upon the same Foundation establishing the Hierarchy of the Church of *England*—in all Time coming?

5. Are they not under the Scandal of swearing the *Abjuration-Oath*, and protecting and screening all those who have defiled their Consciences with that sinful and ensnaring Oath?

6. Are they not under the Scandal of renouncing their Holding of the Lord Jesus Christ, and subordinating themselves to the present civil Powers, by their reading the Act of Parliament anent *Captain Porteous*, and screening from Censure such as have been guilty of that notorious Scandal? By this their Deed they have grossly profaned the Lord's Day, polluted his Ordinances, and homologated that *Eraslian* Encroachment upon the Headship and Sovereignty of *Zion's King*. All which may be clearly seen in *Mr. Wilson's Defence*, P. 163—169.

7. Are they not lying under the Scandal of prosecuting, persecuting and slaying the Witnesses for the King-

Kingdom, Laws and Truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, as is manifest from the *Act of Assembly 1740.* deposing the *seceding Ministers*?

8. Are they not under the Scandal of robbing the Flock and Heritage of God, of their Right to chuse their own Pastors, (a Right that has been purchased for them by the Blood of our Redeemer) and obtruding Hirelings upon them, when they were reclaiming and dissenting? This Scandal has been, of all others, most wilfully persisted in, and in which they are still waxing worse and worse.

9. Are they not lying under the Scandal of protecting and screening Time-Servers, Hirelings and Intruders, and joining with them?

10. Are not many of the present Ministers lying under the Scandal of countenancing, employing, and giving the Right-Hand of Fellowship unto Mr. *Whitefield*, a Person leavened with gross Errors, enthusiastick Delusions, &c. and are not all the rest lying under the Scandal of tolerating such as have been thus guilty?

11. Are they not lying under the Scandal of tolerating, spreading and venting many gross and damnable Errors, such as the Errors of the *Arians*, *Socinians*, *Arminians*, *Legalists* and *Neonomians*: Some of which have been but slightly censured, and others tolerated and defended in some *Acts of Assemblies*, as the *Assemblies 1717, 1720, 1722 and 1736*? All which gross Errors are condemned in the *Act and Testimony* emitted by the *Associate Presbytery*, and in their *Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace*. And farther,

Are not many of the Ministers of this Church very lax and irregular in their Lives and Conversations? Many of them are chargeable with very gross Scandals as to their Morals, and Unfaithfulness as to their Office. Yea, are there not a Set of Preachers lately gone abroad, who know nothing of Christianity, but enter-

entertain the People with vile heterodox *Arminian* Stuff, to the poisoning the Souls of Men.

The above are some of the many gross Scandals and Errors that prevail in the *established* Church at this Day, many of which are more highly aggravated than those that prevailed among the *Curates*; all which are considered and condemned in the judicial *Act* and *Testimony*, emitted by the *Associate Presbytery*, and their other Acts and Proceedings since.

I find Mr. *Currie*, in the 4th Chapter of his *Essay*, condescends upon what he reckons six sufficient Grounds of Separation from any Church, *viz.* (1.) Heresy, or Error in Doctrine. (2.) Idolatry in Worship. (3.) Tyranny in Government. (4.) The Intrusion of Ministers upon Christian Congregations. (5.) The scandalous Lives of Ministers. (6.) Sinful Terms of Communion. All these Mr. *Wilson*, in his Letter to Mr. *Wardlaw*, his *Defence*, and the *Continuation* thereof, hath clearly proven to be in the present Church: So that, according to Mr. *Currie's* own Concessions, there are just and warrantable Grounds of Separation from this Church, tho' he, according to his usual Practice, endeavours to extenuate these gross Evils, and labours to prove them no Grounds of Separation, according to the Measure and Degree in which they presently prevail; and some of them he, with very much Assurance, denies, tho' it is obvious, to every one acquainted with the Situation of our *Ecclesiastical* Affairs, that every one of these are to be found in this Church, and consequently Separation from her is become a necessary and important Duty.

But if any, to shift the Strength and Force of the Arguments contained in this Book, shall alledge, that, in regard it was written when *Prelacy* was established in this Land, and to discountenance hearing of the *Curates*, it cannot be of Use or Service at this Time, when *Prelacy* is not a debateable



Point amongst us. But, in Answer, it may with equal Justice be alledged, that Mr. *Durham's Treatise on Scandal*, which was written in the Time when the Church of *Scotland* was shattered by the woful *Publick Resolutions*, can be of no Use now, seeing these are not a Point of Controversy with us. But it will be, evident unto all sober thinking Persons, who read both these Treatises, that they are of excellent Use at this Time, and in all Periods of the Church, unless wire-drawn and perverted to humour the corrupt Fancies of Apostates from the Truth, who wrest almost every Thing to their own Destruction. There is, perhaps, no Book that has been, or can be written, that will suit the Case of a particular Church at all Times. This Preeminence the holy Scriptures can only claim, which are a perfect Rule of Faith and Manners unto the Church at all Times, in all Places and Periods. But, upon Perusal, the judicious and attentive Reader will see, that the following Treatise is very applicable unto our present Situation; for the present Church, and all her Members, are treading in the same Steps with the old *Prelatick Curates*, by obtruding Hirelings upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations; by joining with the Intruders; by carrying on a Course of horrid Apostasy and Defection from the Lord Jesus, and his precious Truths; by exercising a tyrannical Power and Authority over such as refuse to involve themselves in the Guilt of their Defections; by venting and propagating *Prelatick* and *Erastian* Principles; by advancing the Arguments of the *Prelatical Gang*, and no other, for supporting and defending their iniquous Practices; by slaying (by Church-Discipline most vilely abused) Christ's Witnesses for his injured and born-down Truths and Cause. And to every one, acquainted with the Case and Situation of the *National Establishment*, it will be evident, that there is but too

much

much Ground to affirm, that most of the Characters which Mr. *Frazer* gives unto the Persons he deals with in this Treatise, are most justly applicable unto the Ministers of this Church, who have, in a great Measure, departed from the Lord, and refuse to be reformed. And consequently that there are but too many just Grounds for separating from them. So that the Difference is only as to Persons, and not Faults or Backslidings. And there is one Thing that this Author, in the following Performance, makes a special Ground of Separation, and that is, a wilful Obstinacy in a Course of Backsliding, in Spite of all reclaiming Means. And that this is to be found in the present Church, they are Strangers in our *Israel* who don't know it. For has not she been dealt with, from Time to Time, to turn from her evil Ways, and display a Testimony for the Cause and Truths of *Zion's King*? And has she not refused to be reformed? Nay, Has she not wiped her Mouth, and said, I am clean? Has she not stiled the Corruptions that have been justly fixed upon her, scandalous and groundless Reflections? Has she not turned the keenest Edge of her Wrath and Resentment against those, both Ministers and People, who would fain have reformed her, and rejoiced in seeing her return unto the Lord, by a full and explicate Confession of all her Guilt and Corruptions? Nay, on the contrary, has she not treated her best Friends as an *unhallowed Mob*, while those who have had the most active Hand in all the Guilt she has brought upon herself, and would exult and triumph in her Downfall, have been hugg'd and carressed? And have not those, who have lately appeared in her Behalf, strengthened and confirmed her in her backsliding Courses, by their justifying and extenuating almost all her evil Deeds? Particularly, Mr. *Currie* has done more real Harm to the Church of *Scotland*, by his Writings, than all her open Enemies. That Word in *Jer. vii*

14, 15. is most applicable to him, and others of his Stamp, *They have healed the Hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.* And it is Matter of no small Surprise, and will be Ground of Astonishment to after Ages, that this Church has never seriously reflected upon all the Corruptions and Backslidings she has been charged with, by those who most justly have separated from her, so as to be humbled for them, and redress these melancholy Grievances, which render Communion with her quite unsafe. It is strange she has never been ashamed of her evil Ways, and endeavoured to reform Abuses, and purge out Corruptions. Either she will not, or she cannot do it. I am afraid the first is the Case, and therefore her Condition is most dismal and melancholy. So that I wish we may not have Reason to cry out with the Prophet *Jeremiah, Chap. vi. 29, 30. The Bellows are burnt, the Lead is consumed of the Fire, the Founder melteth in vain; for the Wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.*

Mr. Currie, in his *Contentings* for his own and the Generation's *Apostasy*, does not seem so fond, by far, of any *Arguments* from *Scripture* or *Reason*, as he does of *human Authorities*, which he shapes to his own Fancy, and wherewith his Writings are pitifully stuffed. It may not therefore be improper here to give him a little Swatch of his own dear Way of Reasoning, but without imitating him in his Custom of vitiating and wresting the Verdict of his *human Jury*. And this shall be done in answering some Charges he advances against the *Seceders*:

I. Mr. Currie charges the *Seceders* with censuring and deposing the Ministers of the Church, because they cannot join with them in the present Course of

their Apostasy. To which I answer in the Words of Mr. *Shields*, in his *Letter to the Prisoners in Dunnotar-Castle*, printed *anno 1726*. P. 10. ‘ We may withdraw our Communion from such as would be liable to Suspension; we may withhold our Hearing of and Joining with them; such as would be severely rebuked, we may shew some Discountenance, to testify our Dislike of their Ways; not taking upon us to inflict these Things as Censures, (for we have no Power) but only signifying our Sense of the moral Obligation and Equity of these Censures, whether they be inflicted or not.’ And, P. 14. he says, But suppose a Minister could have a fixed Station amongst a People, even in this disturbed State of the Church, and turned either insufficient, or scandalous, or unfaithful, and so deserved a Suspension, I conceive the People have Power from Christ, (when a *Presbytery* cannot be had) to do the Equivalent of it.’ And, Page 17. he says, ‘ I could never find a solid Argument against hearing of the *Curates*, which did not as forcibly militate against the *Indulged*.’

2. Mr. *Currie* charges the *Seceders* with *rending, tearing and rejecting the Commissions* of his backslidden Brethren, and *disowning* of their *Ministry*, because they *separate* from them. To which I answer, in the Words of the same Mr. *Shields*, *Hind let loose*, P. 228. where, speaking of Ministers being obstinate in their sinful Courses, he says, ‘ Tho’ his (*viz.* the unfaithful Minister’s) Scandals be so *gross*, that we must *discountenance* him, when he persists in them; yet that is not a disowning of his Ministry, or a rejecting his Commission, but a discountenancing for his *Disorders*, until they be removed.’ And Mr. *Durham*, in his Commentary upon the *Revelation*, in a Digression upon *Hearing*, *Edit. 4to.* P. 55. says, ‘ In Matters of Hearing, it is not so hard to discern who are to be counted to speak without God’s Commission

‘ mission; because ordinarily such have no warrant-  
 ‘ able Call at all, (no not in the outward Form, and  
 ‘ so cannot be counted but to run unſent) or by pal-  
 ‘ pable Deſection from the Truth, and Commiſſion  
 ‘ given them in that Call, they have forfeited their  
 ‘ Commiſſion, and ſo are no more to be accounted  
 ‘ Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, or Watchmen of his Flock,  
 ‘ than a Watchman of a City is to be accounted an  
 ‘ Obſerver thereof, when he hath publickly made De-  
 ‘ ſection to the Enemy, and taken on with him.’ See  
 this farther cleared and confirmed in the following  
 Treatiſe.

3. Mr. Currie charges the *Seceders* with *unwarrant-  
 able Separation* from the *Church of Scotland*, which  
 he maintains to be a true Church. To which I an-  
 ſwer, in the Words of Mr. Gilleſpy, in his *Aſſertion of  
 the Government of the Church of Scotland*, P. 188.  
 where he ſays, ‘ Sister-Churches, when they ſee a  
 ‘ particular Congregation doing amiſs, out of that  
 ‘ Relation which they have to her, being all in the  
 ‘ ſame Body, under the ſame Head, may and ought to  
 ‘ admoniſh her; and, in caſe of general Apoſtaſy, they  
 ‘ may withdraw that Communion from her, which  
 ‘ they hold with the true Churches of Chriſt.’ And  
 Mr. Forreſter, in his *Rectius Inſtruendum*, Part 3.  
 Chap. I. P. 7. ſays, ‘ I allow every Separation is  
 ‘ not Schiſm, even from the Church which hath Eſ-  
 ‘ ſentials, yea, and more than Eſſentials, if it be from  
 ‘ thoſe, tho’ never ſo many, who are drawing back  
 ‘ from whatever Piece of Duty and Integrity is at-  
 ‘ tained; for this is ſtill to be held faſt, according to  
 ‘ many Scripture Commands.’ And Mr. Durban  
 on *Scandal*, P. 129. allows, *if Scandals become exceſ-  
 ſive, to depart to another Congregation*. And the Au-  
 thor of *Rectius Inſtruendum* ſays, ‘ There is a com-  
 ‘ manded Withdrawing from Perſons and Societies  
 ‘ even in Worſhip; the Precepts, Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Cor.  
 ‘ vi.

‘ vi. 17. *Prov.* xix. 27. *Acts* ii. 40. will clearly im-  
 ‘ port this by Consequence. — Surely the Ministers  
 ‘ and Professors adhering to the Reformation, must  
 ‘ be the true *Church of Scotland*, tho’ the lesser Num-  
 ‘ ber. Those Soldiers, who keep the General’s Orders,  
 ‘ are the true Army, not the Deserters of the same.’

4. Mr. *Currie* charges the *Seceders* with *Schism* and  
 ‘ unwarrantable Separation, because they *separate* from  
 ‘ the present Church. To which I answer, with Mr.  
 ‘ *Rutherford*, in his *due Right of Presbytery*, P. 255.  
 ‘ when the greatest Part of the Church maketh Defec-  
 ‘ tion from the Truth, the lesser Part remaining  
 ‘ sound, the greatest Part is the Church of Separatists,  
 ‘ tho’ the manifest and greatest Part in the actual Ex-  
 ‘ ercise of Discipline be the Church; yet, in the Case  
 ‘ of right Discipline, the best, tho’ the fewest, is the  
 ‘ true Church. For Truth is like Life, that retireth  
 ‘ from the manifest Members unto the Heart, and  
 ‘ there remaineth in its Fountain in case of Dan-  
 ‘ gers. So that it is the major Part, which hath  
 ‘ made Defection, that are to be accounted Separat-  
 ‘ ists, and not such who stand to their Principles,  
 ‘ tho’ they cannot comply or join with the corrupt  
 ‘ Majority.’ Mr. *Shields*, in his *Hind let loose*, P.  
 ‘ 268. says, ‘ That Party in a reformed Church,  
 ‘ which, having overturned her Reformation, hath shut  
 ‘ out, laid aside, and persecute away sound Adherers  
 ‘ thereunto, both Ministers and Professors, and will  
 ‘ not admit Ministers to officiate but upon the sinful  
 ‘ Terms of Compliance with their Way, are *Schis-*  
 ‘ *maticks*, and their Way is the *Schism*, which we are  
 ‘ bound to extirpate in the Covenant.’ See this Case  
 ‘ of the *Lawfulness and Duty of Separation* more clear-  
 ‘ ly and unanswerably proven in the *Hind-let loose*, P.  
 ‘ 220 ——— 268. where the learned Author, with the  
 ‘ same Arguments that he proves the Warrant-  
 ‘ ableness of Separation from the *Curates*, clearly  
 ‘ proves the Lawfulness of Separation from the *In-*  
 ‘ *dulged*;

*adulged*; which Arguments, *mutatis mutandis*, equally strike against the present Church. And also Mr. *Renwick*, in the fourth Head of the *Informatory Vindication*, proves the very same Thing, and so do Mr. *Brown* and Mr. *MacWard*, in the *History of the Indulgence*, as also Mr. *MacWard* in his *Earnest Contendings*.

5. Mr. *Currie* asserts, that the *Seceders* can condescend upon no Place of Scripture, either *Example* or *Precept*, either in the Old or New Testament, that will warrant their *Separation* from this *Erastian* Church, and such as involve themselves in the Guilt of her *Defections*. But, in Answer, I say, That this Author, in the following Treatise, hath clearly proven, by many Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, the Lawfulness and Duty of Separation from corrupt Ministers and Churches; and has plainly proven, that both Christ and his Apostles separated, and taught Separation from the *Jewish* Church, especially from these four Scriptures following, *Matth. xv. 14. John x. 5. Acts xix. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 14.* These are positive scriptural Grounds warranting Separation from this corrupt Church, which, in spite of all *healing* and *reclaiming* Means, continues *wilful* and *obstinate* in her *Apostasy* from the Lord. And as they are well explained in the following Treatise, so I look upon them to be such Scriptures as will not only warrant Separation from the present corrupt Church, but also from all Churches that refuse to be reformed. It were indeed a sad and melancholy Consideration, if we could fix upon no Precept in Scripture, no approved Example of the Saints, to justify our *Secession* from this Church. If this were the Case, I confess Mr. *Currie* would have the better of the Argument, and we deserve justly to be exposed as *Schismatics* and *Renters of the Church of Christ*. But this is not our Case; we have plain and positive Scripture-Precepts on our Side; we have the Examples of the chief Shepherd and his Apostles; we have Abundance

dance of human Testimonies and Authorities, all fully warranting our present Seceſſion. And tho' our Practice were not ſo clearly and fully warranted by the Word of God, as it is, yet, I am ſure, we maintain no Principles but what are contained in the Word of God, and received and approved by this Church in her Standards, and ſworn to in our ſolemn Covenants. Our Principles, with reference to Doctrine, Worſhip, Diſcipline and Government, are no other than what the *Church of Scotland*, in her beſt Times, held and contended for. Can then it believe with any Body, that a Set of Miniſters and People, who hold and maintain no other Principles, but ſuch as are received and approved by our reforming Anceſtors, are Schiſmaticks and Renters of the Church of Chriſt? Don't theſe Names rather belong to this erroneous, corrupt, tyrannical and *Erastian* Church? Mr. *Currie* does indeed twit us with holding Anti-Reformation Principles. And what are theſe? No other than our Seceſſion. But as this is plainly a Begging of the Queſtion, ſo it deſerves no Manner of Regard. Mr. *Currie* has indeed, in his late Writings, poured out Abundance of Reproaches upon us; according to the Example of the old *Curates*, and has loaded us with the vileſt Names and Epithets. For which unchriſtian Treatment, we don't think it proper to render Railing for Railing, but deſire heartily to forgive him, and pray for his Recovery and Amendment.

Thus it evidently appears, that Mr. *Currie* homologates with the *Curates*, in his Arguments againſt the preſent Seceſſion; that he is pretty far gone into Uniformity with them in Principle and Judgment, and that all the Charges he advances againſt the *Seceders*, with reference to *unwarrantable* Separation from the *eſtabliſhed* Church, are entirely *groundleſs*.

Without multiplying Citations from Authors any farther here, I refer Mr. *Currie* to the Treatiſe enſuing. However, I pretend not to canonize this Performance



formance as absolutely faultless, or free from Slips, in regard the best of Men are liable to Escapes; for, as the Author himself notices, P. 203. 'Godly Men do some Times over-reach themselves, and endeavouring to strike at Error, which is before them, with the drawing back of their Hand; to give it the more sound Stroke, they seem to wound Truth a little with their back Blow.'

But, however, the following Treatise is of excellent Use, at this Day, for the Edification of the Lord's People, for establishing and confirming all honest *Seceders* in the Testimony they bear against the Corruptions and Backslidings of thir Dregs of Time wherein our Lot is fallen, as they will be convinced of, upon a serious and deliberate Perusal thereof. Particularly,

This Treatise is a clear and bright Vindication of the present *Secession* from the *established* Church, which is persisting *wilfully* and *obstinately* in corrupt Courses. And it is a double Rebuke to, and publick Testimony against all such as have abandoned their former Principles, and embarked with Mr. *Whitefield* in his *latitudinarian* and *delusive* Principles and Schemes. Farther, it is a *full* Answer unto, and Refutation of the *Arguments* advanced by Mr. *Currie*, in his late Writings, for condemning and blackening the Banner which the Lord has given to his Servants, to be displayed because of the Truth: All which Arguments are borrowed from and picked out of the *Episcopal* Writings, as is undeniably clear from his having been seen and challenged for frequenting the House of Bishop *Freebairn*, to procure Writings from him, as is noticed before.

It is very remarkable, that when Mr. *Currie* could fix upon no proper Place of Scripture, nor find enough of Arguments from human Writings, wherewith to fight against the Cause and Work of God in the Hands of the *Associate Ministers*, he made Applica-

tion

tion to the *old Prelate*, and others of his *perjured Stamp*; for some of his *old rotten Stuff*, in order to wage War against our *covenanted Reformation-Principles*, as the same are maintained by those of the *Secession*. And the present *Compliers* were so fond of his *stolen Wares*, that they gave him *large Sums of Money* out of the Churches *publick Fund* to recompense his *Pains*; and amply recommended them to all they had Influence with, to lull them asleep in their *Apostasy and Defection* from the Lord, and prevent their espousing and contending for the good old Way, now *universally spoken against*.

The *Compliers* say, That the present *Testimony* is the Spring and Cause of much *Division, Strife and Debate*. But let such as talk thus at *Random* know; that it is not the *Testimony*, but the *Opposition and Contempt* thereof, that occasions such Things; together with the corrupt and sinful *Courses* of the *Time*. They ascribe *Schism and Division* to such as have no *Hand* in it. It can be easily proven, that such as adhere to the *Scriptures of Truth*, and the other *Standards* of this Church, and who, thro' *Grace*, endeavour to testify against all *Defections and Deviations* from the same, can, in no *Sense*, be called *Schismatics*, and *Renters of Christ's seamless Coat*, unless *Zeal for Truth*, and *Opposition to Error* be *Schism*. And it would appear, that *Mr. Currie* and his *Gang* are of this *horrid Principle*, while, upon all *Occasions*, they brand such as are *valiant for the Truth, and the Faithful in the Land*, with the odious *Epithets of Dividers and Schismatics*. But *Wisdom will be justified of her Children, tho' others are given up of God to strong Delusions to believe a Lie*.

If any of the *Agents and Advocates* for the present *Defection* shall say, That this *Book* does not strike against hearing the present *Compliers*, in regard it was written against hearing the *Curates*, who served under an *unlawful Government* which was sworn a-

gainst;

gainst ; to this I answer, That Mr. *Wilson*, in his *Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland*, and others, have clearly, as with a Sun-Beam, proven the present Church to be *Erastian* in her Government and Principles ; and *Erastianism*, as well as *Prelacy*, is condemned in the Standards of this Church ; and, by the *Covenants*, we are as really bound to oppose and contend against *Erastianism* as *Prelacy*. Therefore all the Arguments in this Treatise, that strike against the hearing of *Curates*, equally militate against countenancing the present corrupt Party, in regard *Erastian* Principles and Practices, where-with they are sadly leavened, are as contrary to the Word of God, and the Reformation-Principles of this Church, as *Prelacy*. And, for our Vouchers in this Matter, let Mr. *John Brown*, in his *History of the Indulgence*, Mr. *Renwick*, in the fourth Head of the *Informatory Vindication*, Mr. *Shields*, in his *Hind let loose*, and Mr. *Mac-Ward*, in his *Earnest Contendings*, be consulted : And it will be found, that, with the very same Arguments whereby they prove the *Lawfulness* and *Necessity* of Separation from the *Curates*, they clearly prove the same from the *Indulged*, upon the Head of *Erastianism*. And, that the present Church is more highly *Erastian* than the *Indulged* were, is undeniably evident to all that don't wilfully shut their Eyes. Whereof a few Instances are condescended upon above, to which many more might be added, if it were needful. So consequently the Arguments in the following Treatise, that strike against hearing of the *Curates* or *Conformists*, equally militate against, and prove the *Lawfulness*, and *Necessity* of Separation from the present corrupt Church, considered in her *representative* Capacity, especially seeing many have countenanced Mr. *Whitefield*, an *English* Priest, and who *publickly* owns himself to be such.

Mr. *Currie* has written and published no less than

four *Defences* of the *present Defection and Apostasy* from the Testimony and Truths of Zion's King, which are manifestly calculated to discredit the *Reformation-Principles* of this Church, to harden those who are already involved in the Corruptions of the Time; yea, to encrease the Lord's Anger and Controversy against us more than ever. And it is observeable, that Mr. *Currie*, in all his late Writings, does not found his Arguments against *Separation*, upon plain and pointed Scriptures, but mainly and chiefly upon what he finds in *human Writings*; yea, in the War he presently wages against the *Seceding Ministers*, he always comes out to the Field, armed *cap-a-pie* with *Hearsays, Lies,* and *long Quotations* from Men. His first Performance, he calls an *Essay on Separation*, &c. the second, *A Vindication of the real Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland*; the third, *Serious Conferences anent Separation*; and the fourth, he calls, *A new Testimony unto, and farther Vindication of the extraordinary Work at Cambuslang, &c.* All which Writings are incontestable and publick Evidences, that he is gross, lax and erroneous in his Principles. The first Two of these, *viz.* his *Essay* and *Vindication*, are fully answered by the late reverend Mr. *Wilson*, Minister of the Gospel at *Pertb*, in his *Defence and Continuation*. The third, *viz.* the *Serious Conferences*, wherein he is more barefaced and erroneous than the former Two, which was published a little before Mr. *Wilson's* Death, requires no Answer, in regard it is, for most Part, made up of what he advanced before, upon which he still continues to harp and crow, which, in the Judgment of the most judicious and learned Men, was twice fully answered already; which all attentive Readers, acquainted with the State of the Controversy, will clearly see. As for the fourth, *viz.* his *new Testimony*, it requires as little Answer, in regard it contains many Things which Mr. *Wilson* has fully and judiciously

ciously answered already. And what concerns the Work of *Cambuſlang*, *Kilſyth*, &c. it contains nothing new, but what *Messieurs Robe* and *Webſter* have advanced. Which Work has been considered, and proven to be an arrant Delusion of Satan by *Messieurs Ralph Erskine* and *Fisher*, in their Answers to *Messieurs Robe* and *Webſter*. And truly, in my Opinion, nothing needs to be farther said in Answer to Mr. *Currie's* Performances, or in Vindication of the *Associate Presbytery*, with reference to the *Secession*, than what Mr. *Wilson* has said in his Writings on that Subject. And tho' Mr. *Wilson* had never writ a Word upon this Controversy, the following Treatise is a full Answer to all that Mr. *Currie* has written upon Separation; the same being almost all collected and borrowed out of *Prelatick* Writings: And while Mr. *Currie* makes Use of no other, and no better Arguments than the *Curates*, he must take the Answers that have been given to them, until he can find better Arguments to defend his *desperate* and *perishing Cause*.

And it is very remarkable, the Way that Mr. *Currie*, and his backsliding Brethren, manage their Defences of the present Apostasy and Defection in all their Writings, is still bringing in and advancing the Backslidings and Corruptions of other Churches, to justify, vindicate, and extenuate the present sinful Courses, as if these had been written for our Learning to backslide and apostatize; which is the very Way that all Compliers with Courses of Defection have taken before them to defend their Apostasy, which is a scandalous, erroneous, and sinful Way of Reasoning, to strengthen the Hands of Compliers in carrying on the present Apostasy, to ripen us for and hasten the Judgment, notwithstanding of the Lord's express Warnings and Testimonies in Scripture, against these and the like Corruptions; and when these Churches went on in the same, as a farther Testimony of his high Displeasure thereof, he has long since  
laid

laid them desolate, and written a final Rejection on the Thresholds of these Churches; and if we follow the Footsteps of these Churches in Sinning, we may lay our Account to meet with the like Judgments with them, and be laid desolate, as they long since have been; and when Persons bring in the Corruptions of others, to strengthen their Hands in going on in their own, it seems to me, that they are resolved to go in them, till they be laid desolate, and that they are resolved to be laid desolate before they reform.

Mr. *Currie* is still for going on in complying and joining with sinful Courses of Backsliding and Defection, from Step to Step, from evil to worse, and still crying out, That this and that is not a sufficient Ground of Separation; and which is a clear Proof that he is a Man of very lax and erroneous Principles. By this very Door *Prelacy* and *Popery* were first introduced into the Church; for it was by a gradual Declining from Truth, and by a gradual Advance in Error, that the dangerous Gangrene of Defection and Apostasy in Principle and Practice landed the Church in *Babylon*. But I find learned and orthodox Divines have been for opposing the very first Appearances and Beginnings of Error and Backslidings; and when the Compliers with Steps of Defection would not be reclaimed therefrom, have separate from them: As, for Instance,

(1.) Mr. *Brown*, in his *Apologetical Relation*, when shewing what Lengths Compliers (that were of Mr. *Currie's* backsliding Principle) were come to in Defection and Apostasy in his Day, Page 419. says, 'They are now gone all the Length desired, scrupling at nothing, which is a Warning to all to beware of the Beginning of Defection.'

(2.) The Authors of *Naphtali, or the Wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the Kingdom of Christ*, printed 1693. Page 198. says, 'We are confident, that it hath always been both the Sin and Misery of all apostatizing

‘ postatizing Churches, that they have not resisted the  
 ‘ Beginnings of Defection; and when the Authors  
 ‘ thereof did prove incorrigible, tho’ formerly Mini-  
 ‘ sters, that they did not separate from them, and ac-  
 ‘ count them as Heathens and Publicans; which  
 ‘ Course, if duly and zealously observed, had undoubt-  
 ‘ edly put a great Stop and Hindrance to the Rise and  
 ‘ wicked Usurpation of Antichrist; all whose Ma-  
 ‘ lice and Violence, without the Delusion and Com-  
 ‘ pliance of such who ought to have resisted them, had  
 ‘ never proven so effectual.’

But Mr. Currie has thought fit to stand up for ex-  
 cusing and vindicating, not only the Beginnings, but  
 the Progress of Defection: And the Lord hath, in  
 righteous Judgment, left him to go awful Lengths,  
 in complying with, and, upon the Matter, defending  
 all the Height that Apostasy has come to in this Land:  
 Yea, he has been left to turn over into the Camp of  
*Curates*; as, for Instance, in his reproaching our *Cove-  
 nants*, particularly the *Solemn League and Covenant*, \*  
 as if it did not strike against all Sorts of *Episcopacy*,  
 contrary to what is manifest in that Covenant, and  
 opened up in the following Treatise, Chap. III.  
 Sect. 9. Accordingly he has come to that Height of  
 Impudence, under the Banner of *Prelacy*, as to re-  
 vile and traduce our reforming Assemblies, and the  
 Reformation they were enabled to carry on; and it  
 is not improper here to record what the reverend  
 Mr. *Wilson* says of him, *Defence*, Page 226. ‘ I  
 ‘ know none of the *Presbyterian Denomination* in  
 ‘ *Scotland*, that have not both writ and spoke honour-  
 ‘ ably of this Period, (betwixt 1638 and 1650.) till  
 ‘ the Author of the *Essay on Separation* appeared up-  
 ‘ on the Field.—P. 273. I never heard of any of  
 ‘ the *Presbyterian Denomination* in *Scotland*, who  
 ‘ have not always spoke, and writ honourably, and  
 ‘ with

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\* *Essay*, P. 54. *Conf.* P. 95.

with regard to this Assembly (1638.) and their Proceedings, till the Author of the *Essay*, under a *Presbyterian* Character and Profession, has thought fit to vent himself in a very indecent and injurious Manner against them, while he treats several of their Proceedings as unreasonably bad and tyrannical, P. 291. And I am sorry that I must say it of one of our Author's Profession and Denomination, that he has given too much Ground to hold and esteem him an unjust *Accuser* and *Slanderer* of a faithful, reforming Assembly of the *Church of Scotland*.'

And it is very remarkable, that Mr. *Currie*, in his Writings against the *Associate Brethren*, and the Lord's Work among their Hands, when Arguments borrowed from *Prelacy* fail him, betakes himself to the *Church of Rome*, in order to strengthen him to fight against the *Secession*; as Mr. *Wilson*, in his *Defence of Reformation-Principles*, clearly shews, P. 181, 185.

And Mr. *Wilson*, in Page 63, 64. shews, that Mr. *Currie* takes not only the *Popish* Way of Reasoning with the *Seceders*, but also he shews, that Mr. *Currie* gives the *Seceders* the very same Names of *Rebels* and *Schismatics*, that the Doctors of the *Church of Rome* gave to our worthy *Reformers*, when they made a *Secession* from the *Church of Rome*; so that all the bad Names that Mr. *Currie* gives the *Seceders*, have both a *Prelatick* and *Popish* Savour, and all this is, because the *Seceders* cannot comply and join with the established Church, in carrying on a Course of *Apostasy* and *Defection* from our received and established covenanted *Reformation-Principles*.

I shall conclude this *Preface* with a few Quotations from some learned Men, shewing the true Nature of *Schism*, and that the present *Secession* from the established Church, can in no just Sense be branded with that odious Name. And,

I. Dr. *John Owen*, in his *Enquiry into the Nature and*



and Communion of Evangelick Churches, printed 1681. P. 226. says, 'A Schism that consists in giving a Testimony unto the Institutions of Christ, and standing fast in the Liberty wherewith he hath made Disciples free, is that whose Guilt no Man needs to fear. P. 284. — Therefore, tho' a Church, or that which pretends itself on any Grounds so to be, do not profess any heinous Error in Doctrine, nor be guilty of idolatrous Practice in Worship, destroying its Nature and Being; yet there may be sufficient Reasons to refrain from its Communion in Church-Order and Worship, and to join in or with other Churches for Edification; that is, that where such a Church is not capable of Reformation, or is obstinate in Resolution not to reform itself under the utmost Necessity thereof, it is lawful for all, or any of its Members, to reform themselves according to the Mind of Christ, and Commands of the Gospel. P. 288. — And their Want may be a just Cause of refraining Communion from a Church which yet we are not obliged to condemn as none at all. P. 209. — Altho' a Church, or that which pretends itself on any Ground so to be, doth not profess Error in Doctrine, or be guilty of idolatrous Practices in Worship; yet, if that Church do not, will not, or cannot reform itself, it is a sufficient Ground of Separation from such a Church. P. 197. That a Dissent from the corrupt Rules and human Institutions of a Church-Communion, is as far from Schism, as Man can need desire.'

2. The learned *Gisbert Voetius*, as cited by Mr. *Jeremiah Burroughs*, in his *Irenicum*, printed 1646. P. 173. says, 'The Blame of Schism must not be upon those who forsake such as have forsaken Christ, and the ancient Faith, but upon those who have thus forsaken Christ, and his Truths: Yea, farther, if they impose that which is not necessary, (tho' in itself not sinful) and will not bear with the Weak-

‘Weaknesses of such as think it to be evil; if, upon that, they be forced to withdraw, in this the Governors are the *Schismatics*, because the Rent is in them.’

3. The learned Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, says, ‘If two Churches differ one from another, a Man is bound to join with that Church which appears most to retain its evangelical Purity.’

4. I shall shut up all, with a Confession, which (unluckily for him) is extorted from Mr. *John Lawson*, Minister at *Closeturn*, in his printed Letter, 1st Edit. P. 28. ‘If there be warrantable Grounds of Separation, even tho’ but one, any Member, or Number of Members in a Church, tho’ never so few, may and ought to separate from such a Church, under the Hazard of Sin; and then they are a true Church, tho’ never so few.’

March 6.

1744.

I am, &c.

*It will not be improper here to subjoin the following Reasons of publishing this TREATISE.*

I. Scripture Arguments, for Separation from corrupt Ministers and Churches, are explained and applied, and the Lawfulness, Duty and Necessity of Separation from them, are clearly proven.

II. Answers are given to such Scriptures as are adduced by Carriers on and Compliers with Courses of Defection, for their Justification, discovering that they have no Warrant, Precept, or laudable Example, for their Compliances.

III. That Church-Judicatories have no Authority but what they have from the Scriptures; and, when they act without Scripture-Authority, they act illegally; and their unlawful Sentences are not binding

binding, nor ratified in Heaven, and so no Obedience is due to the same.

IV. The Marks and Characters of Ministers that should be heard, and Distinctions concerning the Withdrawing from Ministers, and what is a Minister's Commission, and when he forfeits his Commission, and when he runs without a Commission.

V. What are insufficient and unwarrantable Grounds of Separation, and what are sufficient and warrantable Grounds of Separation from Ministers; and when Hearing is sinful, and when a Duty.

VI. What are the Scripture-Marks of Ministers that should be heard, and the Scripture-Marks of Ministers that should not be heard; and what are the Marks both of true and false Shepherds; and that unless they have the Marks of true Shepherds, recorded in Scripture, they should not be heard.

VII. That good Men are not to be followed in a sinful Course; and the better the Men are, the greater is their Sin and Scandal in joining with sinful Courses, and the more unlawful it is to hear them; and the greater Snares they are to the People to follow them, and the more should they be testified against, when carrying on sinful Courses.

VIII. Several Arguments proving that it was unlawful to hear the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were both Backsliders, Persecutors, Blasphemers, and guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and that neither Christ nor his Apostles joined with them.

IX. Arguments proving that it was the Sin of *Eli's* Sons to offer Sacrifices, while under their moral Uncleanness, and that the People should not have given their Sacrifices to them, but to other Priests.

X. Arguments against keeping Communion with the *Jewish* Church, and proving that the Saints or Prophets under the Law did not join with scandalous Persons or Corruptions, and that neither Christ nor his Apostles joined with the Church of the *Jews*.

XI. Arguments proving that the several Corruptions, mentioned in the Christian Churches in the New Testament, are no Argument or Warrant for People to join with backsliding and apostatizing Ministers and Churches.

XII. Answers to the Argument drawn from the Practice of the Reformers joining with *Prelacy* before the Year 1638. proving that there were then some that did separate from *Prelacy*; and tho' others joined with *Prelacy*, yet that will not warrant or justify our joining with that or the like Defection.

XIII. Answers to the Arguments drawn from the Evil of Separation, and the Contempt of Ordinances, proving that withdrawing from Hirelings and Compilers with Courses of Defection, is no Contempt of Ordinances, but a clear Testimony of Zeal for Ordinances, and the Purity thereof.

XIV. Answers to several other Arguments for hearing corrupt Ministers, clearly proving that it is better to have no Ministers at all, than to have corrupt Ministers; and that others, joining with corrupt Ministers and Churches formerly, are no Rule nor Warrant for us to do the like.

XV. Arguments proving that the People have not used all the Means that God hath appointed for recovering backsliding Ministers, until they withdraw and separate from them, that they may be ashamed of the Evil of their Way.

XVI. What is the Christian People's Judgment of Discretion, and proving that the same is noway prejudicial to the Authority of Ministers or Church-Judicatories, but that each of them have their distinct Rights and Privileges recorded in the Scriptures.

XVII. This Treatise fully clears these Scriptures, that Messrs. *Williamson*, *Currie*, *Lawson*, and their Adherents, pervert, and answers those Arguments they adduce in Defence of the present Defection, and against the associate Brethren for opposing the  
said.

said Defection, and adhering to the covenanted Reformation-Principles of this Church: And farther confirms what the reverend Mr. *William Wilson* has said in Vindication of the Covenants and Work of Reformation, in his Letter to Mr. *Wardlaw*, and in his Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of *Scotland*, and in his Continuation of the said Defence, in Answer to Mr. *Currie*.

XVIII. This also shews and proves, that the said Messrs. *Williamson*, *Currie* and *Lawson* make use of the very same Arguments against the associate Brethren, and those who are joined with them in the present Work of Reformation, which the old malignant; *Prelatick*, persecuting *Curates* and *Prelates* made use of against the suffering *Presbyterians*, who could not join with them in their *Prelatick* Apostasy, which were long since fully answered by the above named reverend and learned Author; which Performance will be a standing Answer to all that ever wrote, or shall write, in favours of joining with Courses of Defection.

XIX. In this Book the Case and Nature of Schism and Separation is cleared, and the true scriptural Terms of Church-Communion, and Grounds of Separation from corrupt Churches and Ministers, carrying on backsliding Courses from the covenanted Reformation-Principles of the Church of *Scotland*, are clearly handled, and the same proven to be just and warrantable Grounds of Separation, and many useful Cases of Conscience concerning Separation; and what are just and warrantable Grounds of Separation, and what are not, are solidly, learnedly, and accurately discussed and resolved, and the Case of Separation clearly stated, handled and determined; and Separation from corrupt Ministers and Churches is fully vindicated; and the true Scripture-Marks of Time-Servers and Hirelings, who should be separated from,

from, are given from the Word of God. All which are most necessary and seasonable for these Times, and may be a Warning and Caution to all the Lovers of Truth, and of the valuable Covenants and Work of Reformation in *Scotland*, and who have a just Regard to the same, to beware of carrying on, or complying with, or countenancing Courses of Backsliding and Defection from the same, and that the Practice of such, who do so, is unwarrantable and unsafe, having no Foundation or Warrant in the Word of God for the same.

XX. This Treatise is a clear Vindication of our worthy and faithful Sufferers for their not Hearing the *Curates*, and also will be a strong and standing Bulwark, both against *Prelacy*, and hearing of *Curates*, in all Times coming, which may be of great Use at this Day, when those, whom they call good Men, and the better Part of the Church, of whom it was least expected, are joining with Mr. *Whitefield*, an *English* Priest, who is bringing *Prelacy* into the Church at a Back-Door. And also this Book clearly shews, that altho' the present Compliers call themselves *Presbyterians*, yet they are drinking in, and propogating *Prelatick* Principles. And it may be farther added here, that,

Lastly, This Book, being calculated for clearing the Duty of the Lord's People, in *Britain* and *Ireland*, not to hear such as have submitted to the *Prelatical* Government, or to join with them while in the Exercise of such Acts as do belong to their pastoral Office, plainly shews the Unlawfulness and Sinfulness of countenancing the *Ministrations* of Mr. *Whitefield*, who has only *Episcopal Ordination*, which is here proven to be contrary unto our Lord's Institution with reference unto the Conveyance of Church-Power. And besides all this, which is, of itself, a sufficient Argument, for rejecting him as a Stranger and Hireling, whom Christ's Sheep are commanded

manded to avoid, he is chargeable with dreadful Error, flagrant *Enthusiasm*, gross *Delusion*, and horrid *Blasphemies*, notwithstanding of all his high Pre-ferences to *eminent Piety* and *exalted Devotion*. And such as would see more of the Evil and Danger of joining with Mr. *Whitefield*, may see and peruse a large Collection of his *Errors*, *Enthusiasm* and *Delusion* in the reverend Mr. *John Bisset's* Book, who has collected the same from his publick Papers, and refuted and set them in a pretty clear Light. A Performance, which has been a Mean to open the Eyes of many, to see their Error and Folly in countenancing him. And notwithstanding that he is chargeable with so many horrid Things, yet many Ministers of this Church, and vast Multitudes of People, have countenanced him, extolling him to the Skies, as the People of *Samaria* did *Simon Magus*, unto whom, indeed, he is pretty similar in his Conduct and Conversation, while *Blasphemy* and *imposing upon the World*, with *enthusiastick Airs* and *suspicious Arts*, seem to comprehend the main Part of his Character; and *filthy Lucre*, thro' an *insatiable Thirst after Money*, seems to be the Thing he chiefly aims at in all his publick Appearances. Tho' this is the Case, and his scandalous Practices are more flagrant than any of the *old perjured Curates*, yet, because he is a *fit Tool* for suppressing and breaking the *Secession*, he is extolled as another *Apostle Paul*, and carested by all that have apostatized from the Truths of Christ.

P. S. The *Publisher* has subjoined unto this *Treatise*, a small Collection of some publick Papers relative to the same Question therein discussed, which he hopes may be of some Use.

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T H E  
C O N T E N T S.

C H A P. I.

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T H E

T H E

## Lawfulness and Duty

O F

SEPARATION from *Corrupt Ministers and Churches* explained and vindicated.

## C H A P. I.

*Wherein some Things are premised touching the Occasion of this Treatise, and Stating of the Question.*

## S E C T. I.

*The Occasion of this Treatise.*

**A**FTER it had pleased God (for holy, gracious and wise Ends) to send in the —Plague of *Prelacy* amongst us, breaking in, as an overflowing Flood, upon the Land, without Resistance; by which Means the whole Government of Christ's Church and Kingdom was changed; and not only so, but made to run in a Channel against which the whole Nation had solemnly, clearly and particularly sworn: Which *Oath*, and all that followed upon it, the

A

Lord

Lord did manifestly *approve* by Signs and Wonders, and the appearing of his Glory upon the Tabernacle, whereof many Saints, who did behold the Foundation of this Temple, are yet living Witnesses, who can declare, what they have heard, seen and known concerning this, That, while we continued with him, he also continued with us, and, having forsaken him, we were forsaken of him, having first suffered our Manners a long Time, warning us by his Ministers daily of what was to come, ere he had delivered us up into the Hands of our King, and to be oppressed one of another, *Zech. xi. 6. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Jer. xv. 6. and xlv. 4.* ere he had brought us back to *Egypt* again, unto which he seemed to say, We should never return, *Deut. xxviii. 68.* and ere he had turned the Hearts of our Rulers, and some Hirelings, to deal deceitfully with us; in whose Hands the Trust and Management of Affairs, both civil and ecclesiastick, was but too imprudently, and, I fear, too impudently committed; the Smart of which Flame did appear many Years before, from the Behaviour of a great Part of the Land; in regard their murmuring and fretting against the Servants of the Lord, their breaking of Bonds and Writ, and opposing the Power of Godliness under the Form thereof, and countenancing the Uncircumcised in Heart and Flesh, did but too manifestly declare, that they would, whenever Occasion offered, make a *Captain*, and return to the *Egypt* of *Prelacy*, because *there* they might have their Garlick, Flesh-Pots, and carnal Liberty, to drink, to swear, and to follow the World and Sloth, uncontrolled, and, after all, be esteem'd honest Men; when, the Lord knows, they deserved not to eat Bread with the Dogs of the Lord's Flock, whose Blemish would incapacitate them to eat the Bread, both of holy and most holy Things, and yet are permitted to offer the same, and to come in within the Vail  
where

where the Testimony is, and to the Altar, prophaning the Sanctuary of God, to the great Grief of all honest Hearts. After, I say, these Evils had broken in upon us, altho' many fell, and went far away when *Israel departed from the Lord*, yet, by the Power and Goodness of God, many were kept blameless, at least, from *bowing the Knee to Bual*, by joining with the *Prelate's* Ministers in Acts of Discipline, who yet were more clear to hear them, while Preaching; and, tho' they could not join with them in such Acts as they conceived did flow from their Copulation with the *great Whore*, yet thought they might join in such Acts as they imagined were not so polluted. Yet others, again, did question the Lawfulness of joining with them at all in any authoritative Act, either of Worship or Discipline; seeing their Guilt was not only personal, but rubbed very much on their Office, the Exercise of which was built in sitting with them in Synods, thereby acknowledging the *Prelate's* Authority, and did run thro' a Collation and Institution from him: And so these Waters, tho' (in some Respect) good and longed for, yet, because purchased by the Jeopardy of their Souls, and Reward of their Iniquity and Apostasy, it was questioned very much, whether they ought to be drunk, or poured on the Ground: The Lord likeways, by his Providence, discountenancing them, while living under that Vine; which, tho' not to be esteemed as an absolute Rule, yet to be looked upon as a Word from Heaven, to search Ways, and examine the Matter: Which accordingly, I myself, among others, (as the Lord enabled me) did; and knowing that, in all Probability, I might suffer for it, and not being inclinable to suffer as a Thief, or Evil-Doer, or for Matters uncertain and fanciful, and in order to comfort myself in this, that my Tribulation should arise from Adherence to the Truths of Christ, I thought proper to begin while

it was Day, and neither the Night nor Storm of Temptation was come on; which, when up, might have greater Influence in causing me stumble in searching the Way, or be biassed therein. These Considerations, I say, did engage me to search and inform myself in this; and I had not gone far, before I perceived the Waters deep, and the Journey hazardous, a Case to be brought to the Lord himself by Prayer: And so looking up to him, and enquiring both by ordinary and extraordinary Means, I was, by Degrees, in some Measure perswaded to the Negative; in which I have since been many Ways confirmed: And after again looking to the Lord, for satisfying the Desires of some, and to contribute what Help I might to them in this Case, and to stir up others more able, and to shew my good Will against this cursed Plant of *Prelacy*, I have cast in my Mite with others. Let the Lord do with me, it, and all my Services, as seemeth best to him; and, if he accept it so far as to be a Mean of Light to any fearing him, I have my Pains abundantly requited: However, I submit to him whose Will is best: To whom be everlasting Glory and Praise, as is most due, through our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

## S E C T. II.

*The Case stated; und Terms explained.*

FOR the clearer Determination of the Question, we would open these five Things. (1.) What is meant by *Conformists*. (2.) Describe them as to some of their moral Qualifications. (3.) What I understand by *Prelates* and *Episcopal Authority*. (4.) What Kind of hearing is here understood. (5.) What by the People of God.

I. Then, by *Conformists*, I mean, (1.) All Persons in Office depending on the Hierarchical Government of *Prelacy*, such as Deans, Chapters, Chancellors, &c. (2.) All such as have taken the Oath of  
Ca-

Sect. 2. *from corrupt Ministers vindicated.* 5

Canonical Obedience. (3.) Such as have taken Col-  
lation from the *Prelate*. (4.) Such as have promis-  
ed (tho' neither by Writ nor Oath) to submit to the  
Government. (5.) Such as are ordained by the *Pre-  
late*. (6.) Such as come to the *Prelate's* Synods or  
Presbyteries, and concur with him in juridical Acts.  
(7.) Such as forbear lecturing, sing the Doxology,  
cause repeat the Creed in Baptism: Which are all  
Badges of the *Prelate's* Authority.

Now, all these may come under a threefold Con-  
sideration. *1st.* Such as have been ordained since  
the Government was changed. *2dly.* Such as have  
been ordained by Presbyters, but, since the *Prelates*  
have come in, have submitted to them. *3dly.* Such  
as scruple at Oath or Writ, but promise to live  
peaceably and preach, and come to their ecclesia-  
stical Courts. It may be granted, that tho' all these  
Persons have not conformed in the same Measure,  
yet have all conformed, and are all subject to the  
Government. As, when Christ was on Earth, all  
that refused him, did not refuse him in the same  
Manner: For some cried out, *He is the Heir, let us  
kill him: We will not have this Man to reign over us;*  
and therefore *despitefully used his Servants:* Yet some  
were more civil, and made Excuses of *Oxen, Farm  
and Wife,* Matth. xxii. 5, 6. tho' all slighted him,  
and came to one End. So it is in this present Gene-  
ration: All have not in the same Way revolted from  
him, nor displayed a Banner so openly and directly  
against Christ; for some are for crucifying of him,  
and his Members, and Cause; but others are for  
*chastising of them, and so let them go,* and, if they  
must needs condemn them (lest they be accounted *E-  
nemies to Cesar*) they will wash their Hands, cry and  
hope, that they are *guiltless concerning their Blood,*  
but do still go on. This I mean by *Conformists.* But,

II. Let us look on *Conformists,* or *Curates,* in  
their moral Capacity, and see what Manner of Per-  
sons

sons they are. (1.) They are the Under-Officers in that Army assembled under the Standard of *Episcopacy*, which is against the Lamb and his Followers, like these Locusts having the *Faces of Men, but Tails with Stings like Scorpions*, Rev. ix. 7, 10. which are *Samaritans*, pretending to build *Jerusalem*, yet secretly undermining it, *Ezra* iv. 2, 3. (2.) They are such as are, therefore, in actual Rebellion against God. (3.) They are Persons, for most part, scandalous, Haters of Godliness, Persecutors, Mockers, covetous, Drunkards or Tipplers, sensual and ignorant. (4.) They are all guilty of the dreadful Sin of Perjury, and cursed *Achans* in meddling with the *accursed Thing*. (5.) The most moderate among them are Persons given to some Sin or other; so that, for my own Part, (I speak it in the Presence of God) I never knew a *Conformist*, but was either ignorant, or worldly, or frothy, or self-conceited, tho' in better Times they appeared something else. (6.) They are Persons generally unfitted for that Office, by reason of their gross Ignorance, Weakness of natural Parts, Want of Gifts and Experience, contrary unto the Qualifications Ministers should be possessed of, mentioned *1 Tim.* iii. 1—7. (7.) In better Times they were generally the Roots of Bitterness, that did both secretly and openly oppose the Work of God, and draw down the Lord's Wrath and Curse on the Land, tho' the great Sluce was not opened till of late; they were as Thorns in the Sides of the truly godly, of whom they could not be rid, they being too hard for them, like the Sons of *Zeruiah*, and therefore behoved to sigh and groan under this Body of Death: So that (to conclude) such a wretched ungodly Assembly was never before convened out of Hell. I shall not say but some of them may be dear to God, (tho' unknown to me) but I am much afraid, that *Prelacy* (as it now stands) is such a Pit, that they that are abhorred of the Lord



do fall into. Nor is it any personal Prejudice (God knows) that moves me thus to speak. If it were the Lord's Will, I wish the poor miserable Creatures might see the Evil of their Way, and be brought in, and humbled for their mocking of, and Rebellion against the Lord.

III. I mean by *Episcopal Authority*, the *Prelate's* Power, as in himself as in the first Fountain, and from him derived to his inferior Officers, and exercised by, with, and upon them; or the Government of the Church regulated by the *Bishop* as Head, and the rest of inferior Officers under him. But let us consider a *Prelate* in his moral Capacity. He is (1.) the Spawn of Pride creeping in amongst the Apostles, whose Beginning Christ crushed in the Shell. (2.) The *Prelate* was the first Step-Stone of the greatest Enemy to Christ, I mean the *Antichrist*; a Pope in Seed; a Preeminence in Church-Officers was the Door thro' which Antichrist stepped in to the Temple of God: And tho' this Cloud appeared but of an Hand-breadth at first, yet did, at last, cover the whole Face of the Firmament with Darknes. (3.) When Antichrist was up, and came to the Stature of a Man, the Prelates were his chief Supporters; and were the greatest Enemies to God and his People. (4.) When the Fulness of Time was come, in which it pleased God to destroy in Part that *Man of Sin*, by the Breath of his Mouth, and the Brightness of his Coming, and one of his Heads wounded to Death, yet these Prelates (being the Seed of *Antichrist*) left his deadly Wound, as it were, healed again. These Dregs still continued, and were not so clearly seen by our first Worthies. (5.) According as the Light of the Gospel did arise, and the Power and Purity thereof did shine forth and appear in Heads and Hearts, this, before undiscovered, Evil, was manifested by that Light; and the Lord, in all Ages, did stir up his faith-

faithful Servants to witness, act and suffer against it; in so much that the soberest among the *Prelates* began to scruple at it, and exercised their Authority but very moderately. (6.) The longer they continued in the Church, and were suffered, the more wicked they grew; and the Lord did testify the more signally against it, in so much that the *Prelates* did again begin to grow open Enemies to the Power and Purity of the Gospel, and were daily drawing nearer to *Rome*. And their Rage against the Lord's People grew to that Height, that every where they found Effects of this their Malice, all the Ungodly flocking to this Camp and Ensign, and getting Protection under it: So that it is observed, that Wickedness did gather Life warmly, under the Wings of this Government: And accordingly the Devil hath used it as his most successful Engine to overthrow the Interests of Christ; in so much that a *Jesuite*, informing a Prince that is in Heart engaged to the *Popish* Interests, how to introduce it again in his Kingdom, advises to set up *Prelacy*. (7.) *Prelacy* became at last Christ's greatest and only Enemy, in so much that the Lord's Servants, since *Poperly* was banished, were continually taken up in opposing it, as the main Enemy, so that the Battle grew hot betwixt the *Lamb* and the *Dragon*. (8.) *Prelates* are Church-Officers, having no Power from God, but commissioned by a *Civil Magistrate*, whom they acknowledge as their Head: So that it follows; that *Episcopal* Government comes not under the same Consideration now, as it might do when it flourished two or three hundred Years after Christ: For, besides that the primitive Bishops had not such Power as to *subjective* Intention as the *Prelates* now have, nor actually exercised it in the same Manner, so was it in the Times of Ignorance in which God winked at, which the universal Darkness and Apostasy coming

ing in by Degrees upon the World, until the *Man of Sin* was set up, did occasion the *Pattern of the Mount* to be hid under these Clouds; and possibly the Confusions and Disorders of that Time, did tempt many to believe, that something for Order's sake was expedient to be done. The professed Holiness of some, the real Piety and Gravity of others, with their Wisdom, Parts, and Learning far above their Neighbours, as it did give Ground to carnal Reason to prefer them above their *Fellow-Presbyters*, dignifying them with some eminent Place (not considering that their excellent Qualifications were but too great a Temptation to *Pride*, without installing them in a Place of *Eminence*, whence they might look with a certain supercilious Contempt upon their Brethren *below* them) so did it veil and hide much of the Mud of the Mystery of Iniquity lying at the Bottom of this Government. But now the Case is altered; our *Prelates* now look liker *Officers* of the *Synagogue of Satan*, than of *Christ's Church*, and the *Evil* of this Government is written with the Sun-Beams, so as he that runneth may read it; tho' it want not some *Demetrius* to cry it up as the great *Diana* of the *Ephesians*, the Image that fell down from *Jupiter*, especially when their Blood is hot and couraged up. God hath revealed the *Evil* of *Prelacy*, I say, so clearly, unto the Hearts and Consciences of his People, that they all, with one unanimous Consent, have sworn against it, and have not counted their Lives dear to them in opposing and plucking up that *curst Plant*: The Lord likewise, testifying from Heaven, did approve the Proceedings of his People, by a marvellous and glorious Presence, and Out-letting of divine Influences, not only as to Consolations, (which are liable to Delusions) but to Sanctification, which is indeed the *Seal of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. 13. and confirmed them by his Providences, prospering their Un-

dertakings, which made all *Judah* and *Jerusalem* rejoice at the Oath of God. And now, when this accursed *Jericho* is built again, he hath branded the Builders with the Devil's Mark of Wickedness, being followed by the Scum of the Country, the chief Persons being branded with black Notes of Infamy; some with Drunkenness, some with Sensuality and Covetousness, and all of them with a Heart fraught with Enmity, and a Mouth opened against the Power of God and Godliness: The Lord's Goodness doing this, that those poor Ones amongst his People, to whom the Wisdom of God hath not as yet seen fit to discover so clearly the *Pattern of his House* by other Means, which they were not able to receive, might, by these Notes of Infamy, these visible Characters and great Letters of Providence (as their Horn-Book or Rudiments) read his Displeasure against that Way; so that it is not Episcopacy simply we stand upon, but Episcopacy discovered from Heaven, which the Lord will have a Controversy with, like *Amalek*, for ever; Episcopacy sworn against with an Oath; Episcopacy the Grave and Tomb of the Lord's People, who have died in resisting it; Episcopacy which all the profane graceless Herd of the Country countenance; Episcopacy against which all the Hearts of the Lord's People are set on Edge; Episcopacy, after all this, set up without Consent of the Lord's People, but a Yoke violently wreathed about their Necks, to which they must submit, or else be banished or forfeited; the *Apollyon* of God's People, to introduce which into *Scotland*, it was deemed necessary that two of the precious Servants of Christ Jesus, a *Minister of the Gospel* \*, who left few or none behind him, for Learning, Zeal and Wisdom, to fill his Room, and a *Nobleman* †, (to whom, for

Qua-

\* *Mr. James Guthrie, executed June 1. 1661.*

† *The Marquis of Argyle, beheaded May 27. 1661.*

Qualifications, all the rest were but Shadows) and a Prince in the Land, should die; who, tho' dead, yet speak; for the preserving of which, it was likewise thought meet, that many more *precious Sons of Zion, comparable to fine Gold*, should be sent out of the Land, leaving behind them their sad Remembrance; and for the establishing of which another *Spanish Inquisition* (I mean, the *High Commission*) is set up, That *whosoever will not bow down to, nor worship the golden Image, which the King hath set up*, shall be thrown out of Estate, Court-Favours, and Country; which Compliance, or bowing down, is, by Act of Parliament, to be manifested by hearing of them, which is as the Mark of the Beast: Episcopacy the particular Evil and Idol of Jealousy, that separates the Lord and his People, so that there's none (tho' a Fearer of God) that loveth that Way, but is left of God, and has his Eyes dried up, and his Hand withered, and the Sun goeth down upon him; neither hath he any more Vision. These are Truths that need no Probation, being so very obvious. Hence, truly, 'tis no Wonder if we stand at some Distance from such an odious and abominable Monster: And for *Cu-rates*, I look upon them to be integral Parts of that *Body of Death*.

And hence I conclude, That *Prelates* are not the same Thing they were formerly. (1.) In Point of Jurisdiction: They ruled with their Brethren, and submitted to their Synods, but not so now; I mean the primitive Bishops. (2.) What was done before might be thought to have been done ignorantly; but it cannot be so now, unless they be wilfully ignorant, 2 *Pet.* iii. 5. (3.) They were oftentimes Friends to God's People, but bitter Enemies now. (4.) They did not derive their Power from the King, as they do now. (5.) Nor did they declare their Obstinacy till now. (6.) They were not so solemnly  
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and particularly sworn against, as now. (7.) Nor had they done so much Evil, as now they have done. (8.) Nor were they universally wicked, as now; some godly Men were amongst them; there's none at all good now, but, like *Sodom*, all are corrupt, not one doth good, like as in *Hell* already. Nor (*lastly*) were they so witnessed against from Heaven, as now. And therefore 'tis no Wonder, that our Predecessors Behaviour towards them was not altogether like ours: For the Case is altered, so must Practice too, in regard it is come to the last and desperate Remedy: Our Forefathers used milder Remedies, because there was Hope, but there's no Hope now.

IV. The Question is not concerning *accidental occasional* Hearing, as possibly when One, on a Week-Day, comes to hear, to observe them: But it is of Hearing that is fixed and stated, proceeding from a relative Tye, or of hearing as it is an *Act of Worship*.

V. *Lastly*, By the *Lord's People*, I mean such as profess for him, that stick to their Covenants, and declare their Opposition to the present Course of Defection, and to every evil Way in *Britain* and *Ireland* (especially in the Kingdom of *Scotland*) as having had longer War with this Enemy, and as under more *signal* Ties than any other Nation in the World. And I mean of Professors both *collectively* considered, or as united in one Body, and *particularly*, as by themselves apart.

### S E C T. III.

*Some preliminary Positions and Concessions.*

1st. IT is granted on all Hands, That the *Curates* are generally very wicked, profane, and scandalous.

2dly. It is granted by tender Fearers of God, That they should be separated from in a *personal* Con-

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Conversation, whatever the Behaviour of some be. I desire to mourn before the Lord for the great Guiltiness of Professors in neglecting this, for their sinful needless Conversation with them, thereby grieving the Hearts of the truly godly, hardening the miserable wretched *Conformists*, who need no Seal to inclose them in their doleful Estate. Ah! there's little Love and Regard to the Lord Jesus in that Heart, that eats, drinks, talks with, and visits such as have their Hands embued in his Blood, and are in Rebellion against him, and trampling upon his Interests. *Is this your Kindness to your Friend?* I beseech you, in the Fear of God, shew not yourselves so base, as to prefer the pleasing of a *Curate* to the pleasing of Christ.

3dly. It is generally acknowledged, That they should not be sitten with in Synods (and hence many have left off to preach upon the same Account) and such as do sit are generally accounted *Conformists*, whatever they themselves think.

4thly. That the *Curates* should not preach, but give over as their Brethren have done; and that, if they do, their preaching is very sinful. I will prove this more largely afterward.

5thly. It is granted by the most Part, That we should not communicate with them, or receive the Lord's Supper at their Hands: And hence none but ignorant or carnal People, that never had a Profession, join in such Acts with them: If any others do, or have done so with them, it is more rare.

6thly. 'Tis observable, That the *Curates* are not only scandalous and wicked, but that the Course they follow, and the Cause they are engaged in, is an open, stated and avowed Revolt from, and Rebellion against the Lord. This Course, which they follow, is a Design against the Power of Godliness; and, which is worse, 'tis open and avowed. 'Tis sad when *Iniquity is established by a Law*, and when Apostates are not led thereunto by their brutish Natures merely, and to have no farther Reach but the  
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gratifying of their sinful Desires; but it is a Matter of more sad Importance, when any Course, that's wrong, is chosen deliberately, and as a rational stated Mean to overthrow the Kingdom of Christ, and upon that Design, and hence avowed and maintained, and dare appear before the Sun to do, as it were, the Lord's Battle. This is declared and open Rebellion; this is stated Apostasy.

7thly. That the *Curates* Guiltiness is not only personal, but rubs on their Authority and Office, since, in that respect, they have submitted unto the *Prelate*; and is such a Guilt that Persons in Office are only capable of.

8thly. That the united Kingdoms of *England, Scotland* and *Ireland*, especially *Scotland*, are more engaged against *Prelacy*, and, at this Time, more eminently, than any other Nation or People in the World, or before this Time; and that Compliance so openly with the *Prelate* or *Prelacy*, and, at this Time, more eminently, than any other Nation or People in the World, or before this Time, comes under sadder Aggravations to any View, in respect of Persons, than ever it did to any other; and tho' we should carry more roughly to it than other Persons or Nations, we are more excusable, it having never been so sadly circumstantiate before this Time to any other.

## C H A P. II.

### *Some Questions cleared.*

#### S E C T. I.

*Whether the Prelates be Presbyters?*

I. **T**HE Question is not, Whether the Office of a *Bishop* be the Office of a *Presbyter*? For undoubtedly it is not; and therefore a *Prelate* or *Bishop*,



shop, formally considered, is not a *Presbyter*: But the Question is, Whether that which is essential to a *Presbyter*, be, or can be in the *Prelate*? Or, whether these two Offices are capable to subsist in one Subject? So as one Person may be both as a Butler and a Cook, or distinct Officers, and yet one may be both.

2. We look not now on a *Presbyter* in a general Consideration, that is to say, largely, for a Church-Officer; in which respect Ruling Elders may be called *Presbyters*, *1 Tim. v. 17.* nor yet for a Church-Officer capacitated to teach and administrate the Sacraments; for this is common to another Office, and Offices especially distinct from *Presbyters*, namely, to Apostles and Evangelists, in which respect *Peter* calls himself a *Presbyter*, *1 Pet. v. 1.* and so cannot be the essential Concept of a *Presbyter*, as he is now taken.

3. According to the *Prelates* Principles, a *Presbyter*, formally considered, is one having Power from the Bishop, to teach, rule, and administer the Sacraments; for, according to their Principles, the *Prelates* only have Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination.

4. A *Presbyter*, according to the Scriptures, and the ordinary Officer now, of which the Question is, is a qualified Person appointed by God, through his Church, with Power to administrate the Sacraments, and to rule and preach with Authority, in the House of God, with and in Subordination to his Brethren, in a fixed Way. I call him a qualified Person, to distinguish him from unfitted Persons, such as are now a-days. I call him, *appointed* by God, to distinguish him from Officers of Man's Devising. I say, commissioned by his Church, to distinguish him from extraordinary Apostles, who were not of Man, nor of the Will of Man, but had their Commission immediately from Christ. I say, with Power to preach authoritatively, and to administrate the Sacraments, to distinguish him from  
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Prophets and ruling Elders, that have no such Power. I say, with and in Subordination to his Brethren, to distinguish him from *Prelates* who lord over their Brethren, and are not subject to them at all. I say, in a fixed Way, to distinguish him from the Evangelists, whose Commission and particular Charge was unfixed. This is the *Presbyter* I am to speak of, and who is the only lawful Officer to dispense all divine Mysteries authoritatively. And the Question is, Whether the *Prelate* may be said to be such an Officer as is here described?

I shall not much need to insist upon the Expediency of determining this Question, because so obvious to every Body: However, these Things being premised, I answer negatively, namely, That a *Prelate* cannot be said to be a *Presbyter* at all. My Reasons are, (1.) Because the *Prelate*, like the Devil, hath left his first Station, and got into another; and so hath quit that Employment of a *Presbyter*, to rule and preach as a *Prelate*, and, for this Cause, his Room and Apostleship being void, as *Judas's* was when he hanged himself, others are set to take and to fill it; and therefore his Employment is diverse from what it was before. Just as when one quits the Office he had before, and another succeeds thereunto, he is not any more the same Officer. Nor will it avail to say, as some do, That the *Prelate* preaches and rules still, which are a *Presbyter's* Acts of Office, and therefore may still be called a *Presbyter*; because Preaching and Ruling is not that which formally constitutes a *Presbyter*, as formerly described; but it is Preaching and Ruling in such a Way, in and with Subordination to his Brethren. This the *Prelate* hath left off to do, and preaches and rules over his Brethren, and that *ex officio*. (2.) He that from a Captain turns a Colonel, tho' he command as formerly, yet, because not in the same Way and Place, cannot be esteemed formally a Captain; because, he  
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hath quit it, and another succeeds; so it is here.

(3.) A Man cannot, in the same Way, be superior and inferior to himself, as one Man, in respect of himself, cannot be both a Subject and a King: Nor can one Subject found contrary Relation to both the Extremes. A *Presbyter* is one *de facto* inferior to the *Bishop*, and *de jure* co-ordinate and subject to his Brethren; the *Prelate* is one above the *Presbyter*, and his Superior, and not subject at all to his Brethren; ergo, he cannot be a *Presbyter* at all without Contradiction. (4.) One Thing cannot be dependent and independent on one and the same Subject. Nor can one Thing be both Fountain and Streams; the *Prelate* is the Fountain of Power, the *Presbyters* are the Streams depending on him: Therefore he cannot be a *Presbyter*. (5.) One Effect cannot flow from two total Causes, whatever it may do from partial concurring Causes. But a *Presbyter* is an Officer, whose Power flows from Christ, by Means of his Church, totally; and the *Bishop* is an Officer whose Power flows from the King totally; and both these profess, That the total Power of dispensing that Office is from themselves: Therefore he cannot be a *Presbyter*, seeing a *Presbyter* hath no Power from the King at all. (6.) One Man cannot be both an Officer of Christ, and an Officer of Antichrist; for a Man cannot serve two Masters: But the *Prelate* is actually an Officer of Antichrist; therefore he cannot be an Officer of Christ: For what Fellowship hath Christ with Belial? Unless ye would throw away one Half of him to the Devil. But I fear the Devil will make a Plea for, and challenge him all as his own. But,

*Object.* 1. Such as were ordained by the *Prelates* before, were ever judged real Ministers, and were not re-ordained; therefore it seems the *Prelate* is a *Presbyter*, and, as such, did ordain, otherways none ordained by him were to be acknowledged real

Ministers; for none but *Presbyters* can ordain. I answer. These Ministers; and their Acts of Office proceeding from them, were valid; not because of any intrinsical Power conferred upon them by the *Prelate's* Ordination, but because they submitting to the true Ministers of Jesus Christ, and being received by them, their former invalid Ordination became valid: For (as Mr. *Durham* saith) *tho' a Popish Priest continuing in Popery cannot be a real Minister of Christ, yet a Popish Pastor ordained by the Church of Rome, and afterwards turning to the true Church, ipso facto that which before was invalid becomes valid: So Prelatical Ministers turning in, and submitting to the Presbyterian Church, and they accepting them, they materially and equivalently re-ordain them, and ratify their former Ordination. And 'tis known that an illegal Act, if not quarrelled, but ratified by them in whom the legislative Power is, stands valid and effectual. To the Pure all Things are pure.*

*Object.* 2. Stronglier, then, are we to esteem all the primitive Bishops, with *Ridley, Cranmer, Hooper, &c.* no *Presbyters*, and consequently no Ministers, seeing these were *Bishops* with as much Power and Authority as our *Bishops* now have. In answer to this great Objection, some tell roundly, That indeed they were no Ministers, but that God blessed their Labours to the poor People. But 'tis hard to say, the Church of *England* was no organical Church in Time of the *Reformation*. Some say, they were not Bishops in the same Way: But, tho' this might be said of the primitive Bishops in *Constantine's* Time and *Jerome's*, yet it cannot be said of *Ridley* and *Cranmer*. And therefore, omitting these Answers as weak, I answer, That I judge these holy Men did that Act, which, as to the Matter, in a civil Way, did forfeit them of the Office of *Presbyters*; yet it being the Times of Ignorance, in regard they were to be esteemed as *Minors* and *Pupils*, and so in a Manner interdicted

to do Acts to their Lesion, the Lord, their great Tutor and Judge, was pleased not to suffer that Act of accepting a *Prelatical* Office, to the Prejudice of their former, to stand, but accounted them as such that never did it; For it is not the Act simply that legally forfeits a Person's Right, but the Person doing such an Act is to be considered: Wherefore one Act done by several Persons is not the same Act in Law. For, if a *Minor* dispoſe his whole Estate, which Act, as in itself, doth really alienate his Estate from him, yet the Law provides this Disposition null, and revocable at the Years of his Majority, if within twenty five Years: Even so these holy Men doing Acts in their Ignorance, which was the Time of their Minority, and in the Sincerity of their Heart, which itself did clearly enough invalidate their Office, yet, being but *Minors* and Children, new born out of the Darkneſs of *Poper*y, the Lord, by the Law of Grace, would not suffer it to stand, God not looking so much to the civil Formality of Things, as to the Sincerity of Heart, which availeth and maketh all Things pure, and *Uncircumcision to be Circumcision*, Rom. ii. 26. Col. ii. 11. Tit. i. 15. But the *Prelates*, being not under the Law of Grace, and most impure in their Hearts and Conversations, and, withal, come to Years, living under the bright Shining of the Gospel, and so no Children in respect of the Dispensation of the Times they lived in, but, if ignorant, are wilfully ignorant, I say, cannot expect the same Favour with the Lord's Children, but must stand to their Deeds, and their Circumcision is rather counted Uncircumcision, and shall be made to eat the Fruit of their own Ways, and so quitting their first Station and Substance of an Office, and betaking themselves to a Shadow, they are to be accounted no other than a *Prelate*, which is an Idol, the Work of Men's Understanding.

*Object. 3. Last.* The *Apostles* were *superior* unto the *Presbyters*, and yet were themselves *Presbyters* too, 1 *Pet.* v. 1. 2 *John* 1. Therefore a *superior* Power and an *inferior* may exist in one Subject; therefore so may a *Prelate* and a *Presbyter*. I answer, (1.) The Case is not alike: For the *Apostolick* Office was a lawful Office, and did in itself include the Office of a *Presbyter*, not formally, but virtually, they having, as *Apostles*, Power to act as *Presbyters*. But, if their Office was unlawful, as the *Prelate's* is, they could not have this Power; for no lawful Power is included in an unlawful one. (2.) Supposing they were *Presbyters* and *Apostles*, yet not being so *eodem modo*, or in the same Manner, tho' these two be contrarious, because not after the same Way, yet, because they exist not one Way in the Subject, may therefore inexist: For they were *Apostles* in an extraordinary Manner; and whatever they did as *Presbyters*, they did not as *Apostles* *in hoc instanti*; but were *Presbyters* only. Not so the *Prelates*, who would be counted both *Presbyters* and *Prelates*, as ordinary Officers, and so, consequently, constantly so. (3.) I deny a *Presbyter* and *Apostle* to be contrariously related to each other, as inferior and superior, or that the *Apostles* had Jurisdiction of Power over constitute *Presbyters*; and therefore, in every constitute Church, the *Apostles* acted as *Presbyters*. Nor is the Difference betwixt *Presbyter* and *Apostle* thus, that the one acted subordinately to the other, but that the one is immediately from Christ, the other by Means of the Church; the One's Commission is extensive over the whole World, the other is fixed to some particular Churches; and that the one had a greater Measure of Gifts and Graces than the other, from all which did result a Priority of Dignity; and hence called *first* in the Church. And that they acted as *Presbyters*, and assumed no such Jurisdiction, is clear from *Acts* xi. xv. both submitting to a Con-

vention of Brethren. But (*lastly*) which doth loose the Knot altogether, they were *Presbyters*, taking the Name of *Presbyter* largely, for any Church-Officer, as I said in the Beginning; so a General of an Army may be called a Soldier, tho' not formally so: But, take it strictly, they were not *Presbyters*: For, if they had Superiority in themselves over *Presbyters*, as the Objection would contend, then would they not be inferior to themselves, such as *Presbyters* were, and so could not be *Presbyters* formally; for neither *Paul* nor *Peter* were chosen by the Church, &c. And so, tho' they have the Power of a *Presbyter*, yet not the Office of a *Presbyter*.

S E C T. II.

*Whether all the Conformists Office doth flow from the Prelate, and as such, or not?*

THERE is much Stress laid on the *Conformists* Ordination, especially such of them as have been admitted under *Presbytery*, alledging, That their *Presbyterian* Ordination standeth, and therefore all such are authorized to preach, and, being Ministers, may be heard. And therefore, to roll this Stone away from this Sepulchre, I think it expedient to enquire into this Matter: And, that we may the better do this, we will first explain and state the Question, and then proceed to the Resolution thereof. What I mean by *Conformists* I have already shewn, as also what I mean by the *Prelates*. I will shew you now (1.) what I mean by [Offices;] and (2.) what it is to [flow from.]

*First*, The Word [Office] in Scripture, is used two Ways, (1.) For the Acts flowing from any Relation; thus *Exod.* 1. 16. 1 *Tim.* iii. 1. (2.) It is taken for the Relation from which these Acts do proceed. Thus a Captain is said to be in Office while unreduced, and under Pay, tho' he go not always about the Acts that do belong to that Office; and thus I take it here. Now, as in every Relation there

are these three Things. 1<sup>st</sup>. The two Extremes. 2<sup>dly</sup>. The Reason upon which the Relation is built; as in the Relation of a Master and Servant, there is the Person serving, and the Person whom he serves, which are the two Extremes. And there is, 3<sup>dly</sup>. the Reason of the Relation, which I take to be the mutual Compact betwixt the Master and Servant. Even so, in the Office of a Minister or Pastor, there is the *Presbtery* and the Person himself, which are the two Extremes; and there is his Mission, which includes the Pastor's Consent, which is the third, and the Reason of the Relation upon which it is founded, including the People's Consent; and from this doth his Relation of Pastor unto them flow. Now, as all Offices of this Kind flow from Authority, else null; hence, if we would enquire from what Fountain the Office of Conformists doth flow, we must enquire from what Fountain their Authority doth flow; and hence we shall find the Words [Authority, Power, Commission, Ordination] promiscuously used for one and the self-same Thing.

2<sup>dly</sup>, What is it to flow from? A Thing may be said to flow from another diverse Ways. (1.) Physically, as the Streams from the Fountain, and the Passions from the Soul; and so *Conformists* Preaching flows from their Persons. (2.) Occasionally; as Thanksgiving does on the 29<sup>th</sup> of *May*, from the King's Restoration on that Day. (3.) By the removing of Impediments; as, when a Physician doth cure a Minister of the Fever, the Ministers After-preaching might be said to flow from the Physician. If a Minister were in Prison, and if the *Prelate* did let him out, and come betwixt him and the Hazard of the Law, in that Case the Minister's After-preaching might be said to proceed from the *Prelate*. Some *Conformists* say, (for think it they cannot) That the *Prelate* hath only removed the physical Impediment that was in the Way: But I fear, upon narrow Search,



it will be found the *Prelate* had more of his Hand in it than so. How hard is it to take with Guilt! As tho' indeed the *Conformists* had done no more than submitted to have the Penalty of the Law annulled: If so, What mean these Promises of Submission, and coming to the *Episcopal Synod*? (4.) As a Condition *sine qua non*: Thus all Offices of State are bestowed on Persons, on Condition they declare against the Covenant, which Condition, tho' unlawful, yet the Authority of such Persons depending thus on that Condition, is lawful, and is the Condition rather of their having the Office, than of the Office itself, which it may well consist without. (5.) By Way of Invention: Thus all the *Conformists* Ministry is from God: For God did ordain the Office of a Minister, and it flows from God, but as it is *their* Office, it is another Question; and thus every Minister's Office is from God, tho' their Investment with it be from Men: For, if any should usurp the Office of Minister, and preach and baptize, look upon these Acts absolutely, as in themselves, they might be said to flow from God, because the Lord appointed preaching and baptizing, tho' the legal Conveyance of that Office be not. God may be the Author of an Office, and yet your Right unto that Office bad enough. There is a Difference betwixt a Thing, and the Application of that Thing to me; and a sad Question it was to him that wanted the Wedding-Garment, *How camest thou in hither?* God will say to many *Conformists*, *How came ye hither?* The Office is mine, but how came ye by it? *Psalms* l. 21. A Charter and Infettment is not a valid Title to possess Lands, unless there be a legal Conveyance of it. Possession is no Title in God's Account. Forty Years Prescription will not make a *Conformist's* Title to his Office valid; 'tis dangerous, a robbing of God; better the *Turks Alcoran* were the Author of your Office, if ye shew no Title to it from God. (Lastly) A Thing may be said

to flow from another essentially, as from an efficient or subjective Cause: Thus all Creatures move from God; and thus the Sheriff's Power doth flow from the King: As therefore every Act is specified from its principal Object, even so it is here. If a Man and an Angel should throw one Stone unto one Place, yet these Acts were specifically distinct, in respect a Man and an Angel, the two Principles of these Actions, were specifically different: Not so, if two Men did throw it: And hence, if two Men were throwing one Stone to diverse Places, yet these Actions were specifically different, in respect of the Diversity of Places to which the Stone was thrown: If one of the same Men did cast a Tree and a Stone to one Place, in respect of the Object these Acts were specifically distinct; and so, if a Man in Office, and another out of Office, would do the same Act, *viz.* pass a Decree, yet these Acts were not the same, morally considered. So, unless the Ends, Principles and Actions be good, the Action is not morally good. Now then to the Case in Hand. The Question will be, From what subjective moral Principle the *Conformist's* Acts of preaching, and so, consequently, his Office, do proceed? Whether from the Prelatical Authority of late established, to which he hath submitted, or from the *Presbyterian*? And now, that every *Conformist* hath his Power of preaching from the *Prelate*, tho' he were first ordained by *Presbyterians*, I maintain and affirm, that their former Ordination is null, and of no Force at all; and, that this may be the better done, I will (1.) premise some Things for clearing of the Question. (2.) Lay down some general Grounds. (3.) Infer some Conclusions. (4.) Prove the Argument, the present Case in Debate; and (5.) loose some Objections.

I. Then, I premise (1.) that all Persons, whether Civil or Ecclesiastick, must have some Power that is legal or moral. It is not enough for a Man to  
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have Gifts and Parts to preach authoritatively, unless he be legally invested with that Office: Ability is not enough to authorize a Magistrate's Acts, unless called thereunto by a lawful Power, *Heb. v. 4.* Hence Christ gave not only his Apostles Power, but Authority, *Matth. x. 1.*

(2.) That all Power Ecclesiastick is in Christ as in the first Fountain, *Matth. xxviii. 18. Col. i. 18. John v. 22. Isa. lv. 4.* All that have Power must have it from him; for no Man taketh this to himself, and that by a legal Progress, as Paul calls it his *Power received of the Lord Jesus, Acts xx. 24.* Likeas, in a Kingdom, all Officers and Rulers derive their Authority from him that is King thereof.

(3.) The Lord Jesus not being in Earth, but gone to Heaven to prepare a Place for his People, hath intrusted his Power to his Church, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. & xviii. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 28. & v. 3, 4, 5. Matth. xvi. 18.* Hence said to be *gathered in the Power of the Lord Jesus.* I grant the Apostles had their Power immediately from Christ: But all succeeding Officers have ever had their Power from Men immediately, who were therewith authorized by Christ.

(4.) Whoever therefore, in the Church of God, exercise Power, must have it running from this Channel, and all Church-Officers and authoritative Acts must proceed from the Power that is in the Church, if settled (and so I except extraordinary Cases of Troubles and Persecutions) which Power, if in the Hands of many Officers, is *Presbyterial*; if in the Hands of one, is *Episcopal*: If, therefore, there is no Government actually in the Church but *Episcopal*, from that *Episcopal* Power must the Officers Authority in that Church (they submitting to it) proceed.

(5.) The Conveyance of that Power to its inferior Officers is by Ordination, which is all one with Commission; which is the setting apart some Per-

sons qualified for dispensing of divine Mysteries; which Ordination is either express, formal, and explicit and solemn, as in the ordinary Way of Ordination one is ordained; or it is material, implicit, or equivalently so; which is, when there is not such a formal Declaration of the Person's Investiture, but when, with Consent of all Parties, the Person is appointed to regulate or officiate in such a Place; or when the Person that is to officiate comes to them who have the supreme Power, and desires of them to preach in such a Place, promising Submission, and the Superior grants it. Nor is there a Necessity, when I appoint any to an Office, that I say, I appoint you to such an Office: 'Tis enough if it be granted and accepted by Parties interested; and in this there is presupposed a moral Principle of Authority and Power, from whom the received Office doth proceed; and a Person that receives this Power and the Ordination, which is indeed materially the Will and Consent of both Parties for that Effect, or the Will of the Superior including the Inferior's Consent; and, when it is solemn, it is express and formal; and therefore wherever there is a Power, and Persons submitting to that Power, and depending on it, there is Ordination flowing from that Power, which is as the Union by which the Extremes are united. Nor can there be a Power, and Persons submitting to that Power in their official Capacity, having Influence on the Acts of Office, without Ordination from them, either material or formal, no more than there can be a Body receiving Influence from the Soul, unless it be united thereunto.

II. The second Thing I proposed, was, To lay down Grounds for farther Clearing of this. And (I.) an authoritative Relation may be changed, when it is the same Person that acts toward the same People in the Acts that he formerly exercised; as a Person in Office under one Governor, submitting to a distinct

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Form of Government in the same Place, this Man's Relation is changed; and the Ground is, because a Relation is a Thing consisting essentially of two Extremes, which mutually respect one another, and a Foundation of this Relation or mutual Respect. Hence any of these being changed, which are essential to it, the Relation is not the same; and therefore, if the Authority of his Commission be changed, which is the Foundation of his Relation, the Relation is not the same. The Commission is changed, when the Principle, from which the Authority doth flow, is changed. And hence, if a Sheriff under *Aristocracy* shall submit to an usurping Monarch, tho' he continue doing the same Acts towards the same People, if in Subordination to his last Master, this Man's Office is changed; because the Power from which he acts is changed. An Officer under the Usurper did not act by the same Power, when under Kingly Government. *Conformists*, therefore, under *Episcopal* Authority, are not under the same Power of *Presbytery* they were under before.

2d Ground. The *Synodical Convention* in every respective Province, meeting two Times in a Year, is an *Episcopal* Meeting, and not a *Presbyterian*. Rational and ingenuous Spirits would not put one to the Probation of this. But it is plain it is so, (1.) Because called and dissolved by the *Prelates*, who have no Power over *Presbyterian* Conventions *ad intra*. No Man can, by Reason of an intrinsical Power, call a Meeting or dissolve it, which is not under his Jurisdiction, so as it cannot be without him. (2.) The Members of this Synod are *Prelatical*, such as *Bishops, Deans, Chapters, &c.* and therefore the Synod, compounded of such, is likewise *Prelatical*; as a Meeting of *English* Persons is an *English* Meeting. (3.) In respect *Presbyterial* Meetings are discharged by Law. (4.) A *Presbyterian* Meeting hath, as a Part of its Constitution, *Ruling*  
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*Elders*; but this hath none. (5.) A *Presbyterial* Synod hath Power to chuse their own Moderator; 'tis not so here. (6.) If this be not an *Episcopal* Meeting, then hath not *Episcopal* Government been introduced at all. For where kythes it unless here? (*Lastly*) Let any Man tell what is required to the making up of an *Episcopal* Synod, which this wants. Some say this comes as the Representatives of *Presbyterian* Government. Oh Madness and Ignorance!

*3d Ground.* All Officers, as such, submitting to a Government, and actually officiating, derive their Office and Authority from that Government. If therefore *Conformists* be under *Prelacy*, and have thereunto submitted, their Power must flow therefrom; Into whatever Stock an Imp is ingrafted, from that it receives Nourishment, and in it lives and brings forth Fruit. If a Captain leave his own Party, and submit unto and take Place from the Enemy, his Acts henceforth can be but interpreted to proceed from his new Relation: For it is absurd to think of an Officer's submitting, as such, to an Authority, and yet not to act under it: For an Officer's Submission to another Government is all one with a new Commission, and is an Evidence, that he hath undoubtedly deserted his old. 'Tis absurd to imagine one Member acting juridically in a Court by virtue of another Power. Nor can any Officer under *Presbytery* submit to the *Prelates*.

*4th Ground.* No Person can be at once under two supreme distinct Governments; because no Man can serve two Masters. You cannot, at one Time, be subject to *Episcopal* and *Presbyterial* Government: For it involves a Contradiction; and thereby a Necessity will be laid of obeying contradictory Commands.

*5th Ground.* A Person may be under a Government, tho' he never, in exprefs Words, submit to that Government. We are all the King's Subjects, tho'

we never took, many of us, the Oath of Allegiance. When I come before a Court, and defend, I am thereby made subject to the Authority of that Court, tho' the Judge ask me not, in the Beginning, whether I own the Authority of that Court or not: To vote judicially in a Court, is equivalent to an express Declaration of myself a Member of that Court. And so, Hearing of *Conformists* is an implicit and material involving myself in a Relation-Tye to the *Curate*. Conforming to the *Bishop's* authoritative Commands is a direct Submission to him; for his Servants we are whom we obey. Doers of the *Bishop's* Will are his Servants. Beware of a Heart and practical Covenant with Death and Hell. That was a Question some of the *Jews* asked, *When the Messiah will come, will he do greater Works than these?* So I say, when ye have sworn, I have renounced *Presbyterian* Government, will ye do greater Works of Compliance? namely, to come to *Synods*, cause repeat the Creed, forbear lecturing, and Lord the *Prelate*. Many questioned the *Apostle's* Authority; and how doth he prove it? *Were not the Works of an Apostle, saith he, done by me?* So, I say, are not the Works of the *Prelate's* Servants done by you? His you are, and his Lusts you will do.

*6th Ground.* A Pastor's regimental Acts, and his doctrinal Acts, do proceed from the same Power and Relation, and not from two distinct Principles. A Shepherd, as such, hath both Power to guide and feed the Flock. If the *Conformists* Acts of Rule do proceed from the *Prelate*, then do their Acts of Worship and Teaching likewise proceed from him: One Key opens both these Doors, and both these Keys hang, as it were, on one String. For their Doctrines must be tried and censured by him, and hence they must be subject to one.

*7th Ground.* *Episcopal* Government doth not consist in one Person, as the adequate Subject of Rule,  
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but in many ; in one as in the Fountain, and from him it streams to others ; as Monarchy is not denominated from the Prince only, but likewise from the Subject. Government containeth both Superiors and Inferiors.

*5th Ground.* The Denomination of *Episcopal* Government is not taken from the Persons, by which, on which, or through which it is exercised, but from the Form and Manner of Government used among these Persons. We did not, in the Covenant, abjure the Persons of any Man, or Men ; but we did abjure the Form of Government exercised by such ; And, seeing no Form can exist without its Subject, we did therefore renounce *Bishops* and *Deans* in the Concrete. I have added these two last, because some say they do submit to *Episcopal* Government in Synods, because they join with the *Presbyterians*, the same Persons that were with them before. This is but a Say, for it is not the Persons, but the Form of Government that gives the Denomination to a Government ; for Persons may change, and new Ages may produce new Persons, and yet no new Government, till the Form be changed. Those that do join with *Bishops* and *Deans*, submit formally unto *Episcopal* Government, and tho' these be the same Persons, physically considered, yet not the same morally : So likewise, when it is alledged, that other *Presbyters* ordain with the *Bishop*, and the Ordained are commissioned by *Presbyters*, and not by the *Prelate* ; What then ? Tho' all this were true, yet is he ordained by a *Prelatical* Authority ; because, as I said in my *seventh Ground*, the Authority is dispersed thro' every Officer under it : And therefore, ordain who will, the *Intrant* is ordained by *Prelatical* Authority and Power.

III. The third Thing to be handled, is some Conclusions arising from the Premisses. And the first is this. All Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination is  
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in the Prelate *de facto*; for *de jure* it is not; the Civil Magistrate's Pleasure and Bounty being his best Charter. I say, he hath all Power in him *de facto*. I need no Proof of this; for *Episcopacy* is the Power of the Church ingrafted in one, by which it differs from *Presbyterial* Government, which is the Power in many equally distributed. If therefore there be *Episcopal* Government erected amongst us, then surely the actual Power of that Church is ingrafted in him. This is sufficiently known by their Doctrine and Tenets, and by the Constitution of that Government, and by the arbitrary Practice of the *Prelates*: And hence he assumes a *negative Vote* in Synods, and sits not as Moderator there, but as a *Plenipotentiary Princ*; and hence may solely excommunicate, depose, and suspend as he pleases: And truly, amongst his *Curates*, I may justly say, he is the *Chief of the Children of Pride*. It is true, he will not turn any Thing against the Synod's Mind: No more will the King in his Parliament, who yet hath all Power engrossed in him: And therefore this doth not proceed, as I suppose, from Want of Power, but from Want of Pomp and Grandeur to attend the royal Sentence issuing out of that Power: And therefore Acts are not ordinarily done by himself alone, because it is not fitting the royal Majesty of a *Prelate* to do ought without his Train. Therefore it is that the poor *Curates* vote with him, ordain with him, not to add Authority to any Thing he doth, which is full in himself without them, but to add Grandeur and Splendor thereunto: Yet will the *Prelate* sometimes shew Sovereignty to manifest that he can act alone, and is worth Ten Thousand of them. This is the Truth, let Men mince it as they will, and talk of the *Prelate* as a *Presbyter*: He hath a *negative Vote* of Jurisdiction, which no *Presbyter* hath, and has as much Power as many absolute Princes have.

*Conclus. 2d.* Conformists are some way under the *Prelate*, which is clear in this. (1.) That they give an Oath or Promise of Obedience, which involves Submission; they submit to synodical Censures, which have their Life and Authority from the *Prelate*. (2.) He is their Creator, he calls them, and they are; he closes up, and they return unto their first moral Nothing; and he is their *God*, in a Manner, *in whom they live, move, and have their Being*. (3.) This appears, in that their Preaching, Praying, Singing and Baptizing, are regulated, bounded and ordered by the *Prelate*. If he forbid, they lecture not; they sing what *Psalms* he pleases, and take Words from him in Prayer: So that, in all their official Acts, you may see the Sign of the *Prelate's* Acts stamped on them. In Prayer see the Necessity of it: Imposition of the Lord's Prayer is more than Christ arrogated to himself, who commanded to *pray after this Manner*: In baptizing, the Sign of it is, in causing repeat the Creed; yea, so imposed under Pain of Deposition. If these authoritative Acts did not proceed from him at all, how would he regulate or bound them, not pretending to the civil Magistracy in that? (4.) The *Bishop* may and doth depose them; which he could not do, unless they were under him: For none can put out of Office, but he who hath Power to put in. (*Lastly*) This appears, in that these poor miserable Creatures do peaceably submit to his Censures: And as they were before subject to *Presbyterial* Government, and hence submitted to their Censures, and were ordered by them, so, in their present Acts of Office, they pay some Kind of Subjection to the *Prelate*, and *Prelatical* Government.

*Conclus. 3d.* *Conformists* are under the *Prelates* as Ministers: And this I demonstrate thus; they are some Way under them, as I have proven already: Now, all the Relation Ministers come under, is  
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either as they are civil Persons; and thus they are subject to the King; or as they are spiritual Persons; and, if so, either as private Christians, and then how required to sit in Synods, and what more they than other private Christians? It remains therefore, that, as Church-Officers, they are subject to him.

*Conclus. 4th.* Their authoritative Acts, whether preaching, or ruling, do proceed from *Episcopal Authority*: For seeing, as Officers, they are subject to him, and these Acts following from them as such, these their Acts, therefore, must flow from the *Bishop*: For the Fountain and Streams flow together. And, for farther clearing of it, I will,

IV. In the fourth Place, give some Arguments to prove it.

*Arg. 1.* Those whom the *Prelate* can depose, censure, or ordain, are under the *Prelate*: But the *Prelate* may do this according to Law to all *Conformists*, and actually doth it: Therefore, no Man can take away a Power, but he that gives it; the same Power that annihilates, creates both morally and physically. And tho' the *Prelates* usurp it, yet they, complying thereunto, are legally and actually under it. And hence, if the *Conformists* Power did flow from *Presbytery*, none but the *Presbytery* could depose or censure them.

*Arg. 2d.* All authoritative ecclesiastick Acts, such as preaching, dispensing of the Sacraments, do proceed from that Authority under which the Person issuing forth such Acts doth live, and which is in the Church, and to which the Person hath submitted, as is clear in my *third Ground*. But the *Conformists*, as Ministers, are therefore subject to the *Prelate*, or *Prelatical Authority*, as I have proven in my *third Conclusion*.

*Arg. 3d.* If the *Conformists* regimental Acts do proceed from the *Prelate*, then their doctrinal Acts do likewise proceed from him: But the *Con-*

*formists* regimental Acts do proceed from the *Prelate*, &c. I have proven this Proposition in my 6th Ground. The Minor is plain, viz. That all Acts of Discipline do proceed from the *Prelate*. Let any that would see a Proof of it, come but to a *Synod*, and his Eyes and Ears may know it.

*Arg. 4th.* If the *Prelate* can regulate, moderate, suspend, order, restrain, cut and carve upon the *Conformists* preaching, praying, and baptizing, and chap them after what Manner he pleases, then these Acts are some Way liable to the *Prelate* to cognosce upon: For none can bound, order and regulate Acts, but he that hath an intrinsical Power over them, and in them; but the *Prelate* doth so. Would you then see the *Prelate's* universal Power over the *Curates*, and all their Actions? Then but look to a *Conformist* in *Synods*, preaching, praying and baptizing, ye shall see the Stamp of the *Prelate's* Authority in every one of these. The *negative Votes* in *Synods* speak it; their forbearing of lecturing shews it in preaching; Repetition of the *Creed* shews it in Baptism; the *Doxology* in singing of *Psalms*; the *Lord's Prayer* in Prayer. Ye will say, the *Prelate* usurps it over you, and meddles with what is not his. But why do ye submit? When ye give it, ye give him a Title; *volenti non fit injuria*. Ye should have, at least, remonstrated and protested, and then ye should have preserved your ravished Liberties to yourselves: This ye did not, and therefore guilty. This is more evil within, that the General Assembly in *Presbyterial* Government did command lecturing: And if the *Curates* Authority did now actually proceed from the General Assembly, Why is not the General Assembly obeyed? Why forbear ye lecturing at the *Prelate's* Command? Ye have cast off the Command of your old Masters, as a Token that ye have rejected themselves. *His Servants ye are whom ye obey: The Prelates ye are, and*  
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his Lusts ye will do. What needs more Witnesses?

*Arg. 5th.* Those who are united to a Government, either actually, by receiving Ordination therefrom, or passively, by coming under its Influence, or suffering it to overpower them, must needs derive all Life and Authority from that Power and Government: But *Conformists* have cut themselves from the Vine of *Presbytery*, and have submitted to the *Prelate*; and, in submitting to the *Prelate*, impeded themselves into that Stock: And, therefore, in and from him must they bear Fruit. Their first Husband liveth, and they are married to another; and therefore the Children they bring forth are not legitimate, but Bastards, Children of the *Bond-Woman*, that must be cast out. In some Kingdoms, if a Countess, her Husband being dead, remain a Widow, she hath the Place she had formerly, not so if married to an inferior Subject. Ye that are married to *Prelacy*, cannot claim the Power that the unmarried Widows of *Presbytery* may do. A runaway Officer doth not officiate there, by virtue of his old Authority and Place, in the Enemy's Camp, but by virtue of the new. Now, the *Conformists* have submitted to the *Prelate*, and acknowledged his Courts, and by this their Submission, as the *ratio fundandi*, there is a Relation of Superior and Inferior betwixt them: And all their after Acts of Office proceeding from them, in which respect they do submit, must be interpreted to flow from this new Relation: The Body acts from that Soul to which it is united. This is farther confirmed, in that there is a Law discharging *Presbyterial* Government, and setting up *Prelatical* in its Stead, which Law doth not strike against those who have, and do yet stand to their former Principles. Now, *Conformists*, by Submission to the *Prelates*, have ratified that Law, and are actually under the Dominion of *Prelates*, according to the Law; which Dominion, tho' unjust, yet are *Conformists*, by active  
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and actual Submission thereunto, under it, tho' they sin in so doing. It may be said, that the Government is not changed, but a new Officer set up, and they continue as they did formerly; they preach Christ as they did formerly. I answer, 'Tis false; for it were so, if a new *Presbyterian* were put upon the Flock; but the Adversary of Christ Jesus, with whom he hath been so long contending, and against whom his loving Subjects have sworn, hath come in: And, because the old faithful Officers of Christ will not acknowledge his usurped Authority, they will not be suffered, but are turned out, and therefore, whoever submits, submits to the Enemy; for two Forms cannot be in one Subject: For, as the Form of Fire introduced in Wood, destroys the former, so doth the new Form of *Episcopacy* destroy the former Form of *Presbytery*, in all these Subjects into which it is introduced.

*Arg. 6th.* Those who are subject unto the *Episcopal* Synod, are subject unto the *Prelatical* Government used and exercised in these Courts. I acknowledge a Person's Power, when I subject myself unto his Courts. Now, the Synod is an *Episcopal* Synod, as I have proven in my *second Ground*.

Many more Arguments might here be taken notice of, but these shall suffice at present. Let me now proceed to the fifth and last Thing I promised, which was to propose and remove some Objections.

*Object. 1.* Some of the *Conformists* have received their Ordination from *Presbytery*, and have not renounced it: Therefore are they subject to them still; they receive no new Commission from the *Prelate*; and therefore may be said to continue in the old Relation.

*Ans. (1.)* At least, those who had been admitted by the *Bishop*, are not to be heard then. But (2.) it is true many of them were ordained by *Presbytery*:  
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But, by their Submission to *Prelacy*, are come under a new Relation; and do not act by virtue of the old. Therefore I distinguish the Proposition. The *Conformists* have not renounced *Presbytery*, and taken a new Commission from the *Prelates* expressly and explicitly. I grant they have not renounced their former Ordination, and taken a new Ordination implicitly, materially and equivalently. It is false: Their Submission unto the *Prelates* is a direct practical Renunciation of their former Ordination, as it did connote the Power that gave it, and the Governors. Now, is it needful, when a Servant engages with a new Master, that he, in express Terms say, I here solemnly renounce the Service of my old Master? His very agreeing to serve a new Master is sufficient for that. So here the *Conformists* first promising Submission unto the *Prelate*, and then preaching under him, is a direct Taking of a new Commission from the *Prelate*; he assuming all Power to himself, equally at first dispersed among many *Presbyters*, and they resigning this unto him, as into the Superior's Hands, are by Collation from him inset in their Offices.

*Object. 2d.* The *Prelates* Power is but usurped; and therefore their real Power is from *Presbytery* still. I answer, True, the *Prelate* first usurps it: But they, subjecting themselves unto that usurped Power, have made their own no Power at all. The *Conformists*, by submitting unto the *Prelate*, have given up a Right formerly belonging unto them, unto the *Prelate*; and now hold all of him. And, tho' the Power be but usurped, yet they acting under that usurped Power, it will not follow that these Acts proceed from the old Authority. *Oliver Cromwel* did usurp a Right over *Britain* and *Ireland*, and Judges were constitute by him and the Common-Wealth, tho' at first appointed and ordained by his Majesty: Yet, during the Usurpation, will it follow therefore, that, because of an usurped Authority over them, all their authoritative

rative Acts, during the Usurper's Time, did flow from that legal Authority whereby they were first installed in their Offices? Now, I suppose some will say, Why was Submission, then, judged Treason? And therefore, tho' an usurped Title be not a good Tryal-Title *in genere juris & moris*, yet it is a real, tho' not a good Right *in genere entis*. I say, it is a real Right, tho' not a good Right. *Conformists* have really submitted to the *Prelate*, and are teaching under him, and all their Office-Acts proceed really from the *Prelatical* Authority, tho' wrongfully, and therefore not to be acknowledged. This Argument proves rather, that they should not be heard, seeing the Authority is but usurped: And all that follows is, the *Conformists* are not lawfully and rightly under the *Prelate*, and their Office-Acts are illegal; which is granted, and is the Thing contended for. But it follows not, that their Acts proceed not really from that usurped Authority; which is a real Thing, tho' an unjust Thing.

*Object. 3d.* The *Prelate's* Power is but *cumulative*, not *privative*. It confirms the *Conformists* old Ordination and Power, but takes it not away. To take away a new Seisin, doth not infer any Thing in Prejudice of the old Rights: 'Tis but a *Novodamus*: So here, tho' the *Conformists* have taken a new Commission and Liberty, yet it is not in Prejudice of the old.

*Ans.* I deny the Proposition, *viz.* That the *Prelate's* Power is *cumulative*, in respect the *Prelate's* Power is inconsistent with the other. And it is impossible to serve two Masters, or two Supremes; the last destroys the first; and is no Confirmation of it, but destroys that Relation. Two Seisins, *accumulando jura juribus*, are inconsistent with the two Extremes. But it appears, that the *Prelate's* Power is *privative*, seeing he may and doth depose *Conformists*. Now, if the *Prelate's* Power were merely *cumulative*, he could only confirm or corroborate it: And this doth shew that  
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his Power is *privative*. It is true, tho' his Power were *cumulative*, yet he might take away his own new accumulated Right, or any Strength a former Right had thereby; but he could never take away the first Right, of which his was but a Confirmation.

*Object. 4th.* The *Prelate* doth only give Leave to preach, by taking away the physical Restraint, *viz.* the Penalty of the Law. The *Conformists* preach by the *Prelate's* Permission, not his Authority.

*Answer,* by denying the Antecedent; for then the *Prelate* should get the Law rescinded, which is the *prohibens*, or else, in order to remove their Fear, engage to come betwixt them and any Danger they may sustain thro' preaching. This he doth not; he makes no Change in the Law, but in the *Curates*, requiring something of them as the Condition of their preaching, *viz.* Submission, and either verbal or practical Acknowledging of the Government. For the Tenor of the *Conformists* Engagement to the *Prelate* doth not run thus, That, if the *Prelate* come betwixt them and Hazard, then they will continue to preach: But it runs thus, Submit to the *Prelate*, acknowledge and join with him, and obey; and then ye shall be continued in your Offices. And therefore, joining yourselves to him, ye derive all Life from him. Indeed, if the *Conformists* were in Prison, and if the *Prelate* should turn Jaylor, and let them out, then he should remove the Impediment: But the Matter stands not thus.

*Object. 5th.* *Conformists* give passive not actual Obedience; therefore their Submission is not the acknowledging of the Government. *Ans.* I deny the Antecedent. For they give the Obedience which the Law requires as Duty, which is *active Obedience*; and in which Sense the *Deans*, *Chancellors*, and others, do satisfy the Law, and not the Obedience which the Law requires as a Penalty, for the Breach, or Omission of its preceptive Part. This is *passive Obedience*;

ence; which Obedience the *Nonconformists* give, by patiently suffering to be banished from their Flocks and Livelyhoods. And what a Judgment of God must it be on able and learned Men, to think, that preaching and coming to *Synods*, and submitting to Censures, is *passive Obedience*, which is all they ever yielded to *Presbytery*.

*Object. 6th.* Tho' the *Conformists* do what the *Prelate* desires, they are not therefore subject to him. *Ans.* Yes: For his *Servants ye are whom ye obey*; especially when the Desire includes Submission and Acknowledgment.

*Object. 7th.* The *Prelate* hath a twofold Relation, the one as a *Presbyter*, the other as a *Prelate*: And therefore, tho' he cannot preach and baptize as a *Prelate*, the Office being unlawful, yet may he ordain as a *Presbyter*; and so his Ordination may be lawful: Therefore the *Conformist's* Power to preach is *Presbyterian* still, seeing he is ordained as a *Presbyter*; as a Deacon of whose lawful Instalment I doubt, who likewise is a Christian; yet, being a Christian, he hath Warrant to give and to take Alms.

I answer, by denying the first and second Proposition, and the Consequence of the Confirmation: For not one Proposition is true in all this Argument. As to the Confirmation, I say, a Man may be both a Deacon and a Christian, and, upon any of these Accounts, may give Charity, and I receive it: But one Man cannot be both a *Presbyter* and *Bishop*, because they are subordinate Offices, and the lesser is swallowed up in the greater. See *Chap. II. Sect. 1.* where this is largely proven. But (2.) suppose they might consist in one Subject, (as they cannot) and tho' the *Prelate* were a *Presbyter*, yet, if he, as a *Prelate*, ordain and rule actually, and not as a *Presbyter*, the *Presbyter's* Power must flow from him, as such, that is, as *Prelate*: For as he gives, so the *Curates* receive it, and as they receive it, under that Notion they exercise it; and

and as they exercise their Power of preaching, we hear and submit to it. Now the *Prelate* ordains as a *Prelate*, because, by the Principles of *Prelacy*, all Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination is in the *Prelate*, who is in this distinguished from the *Presbyter*, who only hath Power to preach and baptize, and give the Sacraments; and all this in Subordination to him: And it cannot be conceived contrary to their Principles, which warrant them to ordain as *Prelates*, and which deny that *Presbyters* can ordain at all; and, call the *Prelate* or *Prelacy* what ye will, either *primus Presbyter*, or contracted *Presbytery*, and say that we have yet *Presbyters*; yet this is undeniable, that *Conformists* are ordained by an *Episcopal Authority*. And it contributes little to say, other *Presbyters* do ordain with the *Prelate*: For they but assent, and, if so, no Act of Power at all, this being denied them; they, imposing their Hands, do but signify their Assent to the *Prelate's* Act: And besides (as I said before in my 7th Ground) the *Prelatical Authority* did not only reside in the *Bishop*, but was in all in its own Manner; and that the Denomination was not taken from the *Persons*, but from the Form of Government, which was upon all. Therefore no Matter tho' *Presbyters* join, yet they, being under a *Prelatical Authority*, they do it in and by a *Prelatical Power*. And it is a Folly, unworthy of wise Men, to say, Tho' the *Prelate* himself doth ordain as a *Prelate*, yet the Person ordained receives it as from a *Presbyter*. For, likeas in *Daniel iii.* all were commanded to bow down to, and worship *Nebuchadnezzar's* golden Image, their bowing down was not to be interpreted in every Man's particular Intention, but in the declared Sense of the Law: So, in the Sense of the Lawgiver and Law, ye must receive Ordination, which is to be given as a *Prelate*. But, (*lastly*) if the *Prelate* do all his Acts as a *Presbyter*, then we have not *Episcopal Government* at all, seeing a Govern-

ment is kythed in its Acts. And then, why are the *Cu- rates* blamed for taking Ordination from *Prelates*, or coming to *Synods*, seeing the *Prelate*, as a *Presbyter*, doth all this? And therefore, to conclude, seeing the *Prelate*, as a *Prelate*, ordains, the Ordination flowing from him must be null and corrupt; and it cannot be interpreted to be done as a *Presbyter*.

*Object. 8th. Conformists* Power, to speak properly and strictly, proceeds neither from *Presbyters* nor *Prelates*, but from the Lord Jesus: *Prelates*, or other Offices that do ordain, are but Instruments to apply this Power to him that is ordained, which is *radical- ly* in Christ, and not properly subjectively in either *Prelate* or *Presbyter*.

Here is a fine Knack at last, and a pretty busked Notion indeed. Drowning Persons catch at any Thing to hold them by, tho' never so insufficient. Here the perishing *Conformists* stick at last, and here- unto their blind Hearers have betaken themselves. But this is but a Lie in the Right-Hand of an Idol, and a finely dressed Nothing. And it would bear this (tho' contrary to the Intention of the Proponers) that it matters not who ordain. But I answer, (1.) It is false that *Presbyters* or other Officers have not Power to ordain, seeing those that ordained them did give them some Power; and it was to ordain as well as to preach. (2.) If this may be said, then it may be likewise said, that the King hath no subjective Power in commissionating inferior Rulers, seeing all Power is in God; and that he is only an Instrument which confers that Power upon. or applies it to inferior Officers. But the inferior Officers may be said to have received their Power from the King. And therefore, call it what you will, Instruments of Application, that Power to apply is from Christ. And the Word saith, Christ gave Power and Authority to the Apostles, therefore in them it is: Tho' it is true it is in a Way of Subordination to Christ, so as what they

do Christ does it; *Christ preaches in them*, Eph. ii. 17. But, (3.) whether these Officers have a Power in themselves or not, all's one Matter; whether ye call it their Power derivative, or a Power to apply, and so call them Instruments of Application, all's a Matter. For, *first*, it is certain that the Lord Jesus doth not ordain immediately, but hath committed Power to ordain, whether by Application or casual Derivation of it, to some in his Church. And tho' we should say, that Officers are but Instruments of Application, yet there is a Power given to apply this Power that is in Christ: And that those only that he hath intrusted with it, are capable to dispense or apply it. And, *secondly*, that if any others, to whom Christ hath not intrusted this Power of Application, &c. call it as ye will, do yet take upon them to apply it to any Person, the Ordination is null. For this same Power of Application is restricted to certain Persons; so that none but these are capable to apply it. *Thirdly*, It is certain, according to your Principles, that God hath not given this Power of Application by Ordination, seeing so ye will have it termed, to *Prelates*, or to any single Person, but to many, collectively considered in a conjunct Way. Sure I am not to *Prelates*, as *Prelates*, which is, as such, no Officer in Christ's House, but an Idol: And therefore *Prelates*, as such, have no Power from Christ to ordain, by Application, more than any Woman or laick Person. *Fourthly*, Therefore the *Prelate*, as such, ordaining contrary to the Command of Christ, the Persons ordained by him are not to be acknowledged as ordained, no more than if they were ordained by the Devil, because a *Prelate*, as a *Prelate*, (in which Notion he ordains) hath no more Power to ordain them than any other laick Person, nay, nor of Application. And call it, I say, as ye will, the *Conformists* have their Power from the *Prelate* by Way of Application; for the *Prelate* saith, None hath the  
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Power but himself, to apply this Power, and that as a *Prelate*. And sure I am we did swear against this Manner of Application of the Power: And therefore it still follows, for all this Dream, that the *Prelates* are Instruments of Application; that the *Conformists* have their Power or Authority by the *Prelates*, as *Prelates*, seeing, as such, they apply it.

*Object. last.* That *Episcopacy* is not an Office or Form of Government distinct from *Presbytery*, but it is but *Presbytery* contracted, and that the present *Prelates* have no Jurisdiction and Authority over other *Presbyters*, but all is done with one Consent; the Change is only in the Manner of exercising that Power, which now, by the Law, is restricted to some *Presbyters*, which before was common to all; and all that is done is nothing more than what the rest of the *Presbyters* do, who do nothing without the Advice of such a Person. And thus the Matter again is minced.

But, for Answer, consider (1.) that *Episcopal* Government is set up in *Britain* and *Ireland*. (2.) That this Government, as to the Way of Managing it, is specifically distinct from *Presbytery*, even as *Aristocracy* is from *Monarchy*, tho' *Monarchy* be but contracted *Aristocracy*, and *Aristocracy* dilated *Monarchy*: For, tho' the Power, materially considered, be one, yet, being under diverse Forms, makes a specific Difference. That (3.) all Acts of Power or Office issue from that Government or Power that is in the Church, viz. *Prelacy*. (4.) That Ordination and Preaching being Office-Acts do flow from it too, and that as exercised in diverse Manner from what it was before. But this Objection will occur afterwards, and shall be farther taken notice of.

By what is said, we may perceive by what Authority the *Conformists* preach. The Matter stands thus. (1.) The *Conformists*, being actual Ministers, must have Authority: For they preach not as gifted  
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Brethren merely; which is against their Principles, God also denying this to them. (2.) All their Preachings, being Acts of Office, must have some Power. (3.) All Authority being in the Church, it is either in the Hands of the *Community of Believers*, which is *Congregational*, or in the Hands of *Guides*, either *conjunctly*, and so is *Presbytery*, or *solely*, and so is *Episcopacy*; which Form is now in the Church: And therefore all Power and Authority in the Church must come from this Power. The Form of Conveyance of this is by Ordination, and their Submission, and so in the same Employment they are under the *Prelate*, under which they were to *Presbytery* formerly.

### S E C T. III.

*Whether the Conformists be lawful and real Ministers, or not?*

I doubt not but the Determination of this Question (which hath more Difficulty in it than most think) will cast Light on this present Case, especially to those who lay so much Stress on Ministers Ordination. There is a Distinction common now, a Minister *de facto*, and a Minister *de jure*. And they conclude wicked Men, and consequently *Conformists*, are not Ministers *de jure*, but yet conclude them to be Ministers *de facto*; but such as are not Ministers *de facto*, or *de jure*, not to be heard at all. It is agreed on all Hands, that a wicked Man should not be chosen a Minister. All the Question will be, Whether a wicked Man thus chosen, and that by a prevailing corrupt Party in the Church, is to be acknowledged a Minister? And therefore I reckon it expedient, that something be spoken concerning Nullities, and what will nullify a Minister's Office. For clearing this Point, and my Sentiments thereanent, I will lay down these thirteen Assertions.

*Asser.*

*Affer.* 1. Every Nullity is a Breach of the Law, or a Disconformity to the Law, ordering such a Thing to be after such and such a Manner; and therefore, when the Law is complied with, neither Action, or Thing resulting from the Action, can be declared null, because 'tis legal.

*Affer.* 2. Nothing is in itself physically null, but what the Law makes null, or what the Law incapacitates to be done; or, when done, incapacitates to be continued; or, if continued, gives Ground of Reduction, or Sentence of Declarator of a Nullity. For Things have all their Morality from the Law, and not from themselves, especially in positive Ordinances; and therefore, when we enquire whether there be a Nullity in such a Thing, we must not examine it by Principles of Nature and Reason, but we must look unto the Law, and its Conformity thereunto, and by that judge of its Validity. Therefore, as to make a natural Being null, there is required a Negation of some essential Thing required to the Constitution of that Being: Even so it is in Law, there is required a Negation or Privation of some essential Qualification required in Law.

*Affer.* 3. To make a Nullity in the Thing or Action, there is required a Negation or Want of that which the Law requires as to its Constitution, without which it is not approven in Law. And hence, according to the Diversity of Laws, requiring such and such Things to make up the Validity of the Thing, Title or Action, there is either a Nullity or Validity in the Action. And hence it comes to pass, that Omission of some Things, according to the Law of some Nations, doth make a Nullity, (the Law so providing) which, according to the Laws of other Nations, doth not, that not being required of them.

*Affer.* 4. Every Omission of a Circumstance required by the Law to attend an Action, as to its perfect



perfect moral Being, doth not destroy the Essence of the Thing. Hence, in the Election of a Magistrate or Minister, tho' there may be several Sins attending the Election, contrary unto the Law, accidental thereunto; yet, if there be not a Want of such a Condition as the Law doth declare to be needful to the Essence of such a Thing, there is yet no Nullity. And if, on the contrary, the Law require a small Circumstance to the making up of the Validity of the Thing, and if this be wanting, that Action, thro' Defect of that small Matter, is in itself null, and liable to a Reduction. As, in Executions of Letters by Messengers of Arms, the Want of a small Matter doth annul the Execution.

*Affer. 5.* As in a natural Compound of Matter and Form united, the Want of the essential Part or Parts destroys that Compound: Even so, when Defects are such in moral Actions that do respect the Substance of the Thing, then is that Action unlawful, null or invalid. And therefore, in the present Case, a Minister being a Compound, in a legal Sense, of Subject and Form united, the Subject being a Man, and a godly Man, at least in Profession, *1 Tim. iii. 2.* the Law so requiring, when contrary unto the Command of the Law, another moral Subject is chosen, *viz.* an ungodly Man. Here is a Violation, and that in Substantials, and therefore a Nullity and Ground of Reduction and Deposition. Hence the Laws requiring Sacrifice at the Door of the Tabernacle only, and nowhere else, it cannot pass, that whatever was not offered there (tho' unto the true God) was judged, by the Law, to be offered unto Devils, *Lev. xvii. 5, 7. 2 Chron. xi. 15.* because that was substantially required in the Law.

*Affer. 6.* All Defects in an Action or Thing, which ground Reduction, and a Sentence declaring it null, when quarrelled or pursued, are Nullities. And the Ground is, because the Sentence of the Judge doth  
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not make a Thing void or null; it only declares it to be so, or makes it so forensically; as the Witnesses make not the Deed true, tho' they do it forensically, it being true in itself antecedaneously to their Testimony; as, in *Lev. xiii. 3.* the Priest did not make the leprous Man unclean, he did but pronounce him unclean. Hence (*Deut. xvii. 9, 10.*) the Judge is said to shew the Law, not to make the Law.

*Affer. 7.* A Thing incapable to attain the End for which it was ordained and made, hath in it a Nullity. Or, I say, when the Defect is such, as that, through it, the End of the Law cannot be attained, there is there a Nullity in it, and a Ground of Reduction. Therefore, if a Beast, or a Fool, or a mad Man, should be chosen to any Office, the Incapacity of these Creatures to exercise that Office will necessarily, in itself, contain a Nullity: Hence Impotency nullifies a Marriage, because the Ends of Marriage thereby cannot be attained.

*Affer. 8.* Omission of Formality, or Things required by the Law to attend such an Action as to its moral Being perfect, (as all in their own Nature do not infer a Nullity) so are there made by the Civil Laws more Grounds of Reduction than in the Lord's Law. And hence the Omission of many Things, which, according to the Civil Law, would infer a Nullity; yet is the Lord so pleased to dispense with them, as that, thro' their Want, the Action is not null. Hence, tho' a Child be baptized with the Sign of the Cross, and one of the Names of the Persons of the holy Trinity be omitted thro' Forgetfulness, and possibly be performed by one not in Authority, yet is not the Action null; which Thing the Lord doth for the Security of his People, who otherwise would be still doubting anent the Validity of their Privileges: And hence there are as few *irritant Clauses* in his Transactions as may be. And then the Lord will not have his Name to be taken in vain,  
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and hence will not have Reiterations. Hence tho', *ex parte operis*, there might be a Nullity, yet the Law makes it not so, and God, *ex plenitudine juris*, provides otherways, by dispensing with it.

*Affer. 9.* Actions in themselves null, and contrary to the Substance of the Law, and therefore, in themselves, and by the Law, null and void; yet, when done, if ratified by him in whom the supreme legislative Power is, become of invalid Actions valid, who may either require new prestable Conditions which they wanted formerly; and, if acquired, the Actions become valid; or he simply declares, that no Contrariety in the Action to the Law shall make it null, or, by Silence, approves it. As, if a Maid vow a Vow without her Father's Consent, the Vow is null in itself, and his Dislike pronounces or declares it so; if yet hearing tell of this, and not declaring against it, or ratifying it, the Vow, before null, becomes valid. So, in our Time, all Sentences past in Time of the *English* (according to our Principles) are null, as being done without Authority; yet, the King and Parliament after ratifying them, they become valid, *viz.* by adding that to them which before they wanted: And this Ratification is either express or formal, as when a formal Act of Ratification passes hereupon; or it is implicit and material, when the Persons having Authority do any Thing equivalent to a Ratification of a Thing, as in the Case cited of the Maid's Vow. Bonds made by Minors are declared null, if yet not quarrelled *in annos utiles*, (as they say) after the Minor is twenty five Years old, they become valid.

*Affer. 10.* A Title, Action, or Thing in Law, tho' reducible, yet stands actually irreduced in Civil Things, until it be forensically reduced; and, in spiritual Things, until it be *in foro conscientie*, or Conscience declares it null. When one, by an unjust Title, possesses any Tenement of Land, the just Owner

ner of that Land is not to come, *brevi manu*, (as we say) to dispossess the other, and meddle himself with his own Land, without Sentence of the Law obtained in his Favours; and, when obtained, not to enter without the Sheriff's actual Ejection, altho' there be a real Nullity in the other's Right, the Pursuer having a valid Right. And hence the Sentence of the Church doth but publish Things of that Nature, and causes them to be execute by her own spiritual Officers. And the Ground of this Difference is, because Civil Laws bind not the Conscience immediately, but are for the outward Man; and hence, the outward Man must be regulated or compelled: But spiritual Laws bind the Conscience; and hence, whenever they are published in the Conscience, they presently bind. Hence, when a Nullity is notourly known in a Minister's Office, tho' he be not actually deposed in the Court of Conscience, he is to that Person no longer a Minister. Say not, What Use is the Church then of? *Answer.* To try and search the Matter, and publish it, and see her Sentences executed. And this *Affertion* hath Place in a troubled unsettled Church especially.

*Affer.* 11. Every unlawful Action hath a Nullity in it. Hence Lawyers say, that Bonds containing unlawful or impossible Clauses are null, and not obligatory.

*Affer.* 12. An authoritative Act done by one wanting Power, is null: There are some Persons incapable by Law to do Actions.

*Affer.* 13. Any Thing null thro' the Defect of an essential Requisite at first, that Essential supervening afterwards doth make the Thing valid. As, if a Rebel at the King's Horn were chosen a Judge, the Law providing none such to be chosen, but only the King's free Lieges, if after he cause himself to be relaxed, the Nullity, which was before in his Office, ceases, and his Office is valid.

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These Things being thus premised, I draw these following Conclusions touching *Conformists*.

*Conclus.* 1. The *Conformists* are no lawful Ministers, nor are to be esteemed as such. My Grounds are these.

*Reas.* 1. If any Thing would make such to be *legal* Ministers, it would be their *Ordination*: But their *Ordination* will not make them Ministers. Which I prove thus. A *Woman* ordained to preach is no lawful Pastor; therefore *Ordination alone* cannot make a Minister. Ye will say, A *Woman* is a Subject, by Nature, incapable to be a Minister. I answer, Then there is something more required than *Ordination* to the Institution of a Minister, *viz.* the *Capacity* of the Subject: But the *Conformists* have not that *subjective Capacity*.

*Reas.* 2. Those who are by Law made incapable of any Office, cannot be the Dispensers of the Law, or, acting in Subordination to that Law, be made Officers; or, I say, cannot be made Officers by the Administration of the Law: But the *Conformists* are, by the Law of God, prohibited to be chosen or ordained, *Ezek.* xlv. 7, 8. *Psal.* l. 21. *2 Tim.* iii. 1, 2, 3. For that Law discharges all ungodly Persons. Likeas the Ceremonial Law did discharge any having a Scab or Defect, or Issue running in them, to be Priests, even so the Gospel, (of which this was a Type) discharges *spiritually unclean* Persons to minister before the Lord; for that only we can do, morally, which by Law we can do: But no Law warrants us, but, on the contrary, discharges us to chuse ungodly scandalous Ministers; therefore no Man can make them Preachers. For that which constitutes every Thing in its respective Being, is the Will of God; so that which makes a Thing just or null, is its Conformity or Disconformity to the Law. A Minister is a complex moral Being, and must answer in his Constitution to a moral Rule: And therefore a scan-

scandalous Minister, not being according to the Law, hath no Being at all that is moral; for that which is done without Authority is null. But to ordain a scandalous Man a Minister, is done without the Authority of God, yea, contrary to it: Therefore the Action is null; for all Actions wanting Authority are null. *For there is no Power but of God*, and if no Power be of God to chuse, or continue a scandalous Minister, tho' he be chosen or ordained, he is no Minister, because ordained without Authority. To say, the Church hath Authority, will not do it, for all their Authority is subordinate, and therefore hath no Authority to do unlawful Actions: And therefore all her Actions are null, and bind no more than the Commands of *laick* Persons, who were never impowered to do such Actions. I confirm this by a

*Reas. 3.* Whatever incapacitates a Woman to preach, the same incapacitates a *Conformist* to preach. As therefore the one is not to be acknowledged a Minister, even tho' ordained, so neither the other. I prove this *Antecedent* thus. 'Tis the Law only that discharges a Woman to preach; *I permit not that a Woman preach*. And, if the Law had tolerated it, it would be lawful; and therefore the Law not tolerating, but discharging it, she therefore, tho' formally ordained, is no Minister. But the same Law doth as fully and explicitly discharge ungodly Men to be chosen Ministers, or to preach, *Psal. l. 21. Ezek. xlv. 7; 8. 2 Tim. i. 1, 2, 3.* So, by the typical Law, any Person having a Blemish is discharged to minister before the Lord. Ye will say, It is unsuitable to see a Woman preach; so it is to see a Minister of Satan and Ungodliness, a Minister of Righteousness. Ye will say, They cannot preach. I answer, Many a Woman can physically preach better than the most Part of the *Conformists*, being better gifted. So that it is not on Account of any other Impediment, but merely from the Law: Therefore, tho' we have nothing  
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but the Law discharging ungodly Men to be chosen or preach, it is sufficient to incapacitate them to officiate.

*Reas.* 4. If there be Ground of Reduction in the *Conformists* Office, then is there a Nullity in their Office: But there is a Ground of Reduction in their Office; for, in a well-settled pure Church, they would be deposed, which is a Reduction of their Ordination. Now (as I said) the Sentence of Deposition is of the Nature of these judicial Sentences, which take not primarily away the Thing, but judge him to be no Minister, and worthy to be removed out of that Station: For, if he had Right until his Sentence of Deposition, then every Sentence of Deposition should be most unjust; because it should take away from a Man that to which he had Right: Therefore the Judge doth but execute and declare the Law; and 'tis the Law properly that deposes a Man.

*Reas.* 5. That which is morally incapable to attain the Ends for which it is appointed, in that there is a Nullity, as I have proven in my *seventh Assertion*: But *Conformists* are Persons incapable to attain the End of their Calling, which is to convert and build, and that by reason of their Ignorance, Weakness, and Unacquaintedness with God. *Matth. xv. 14.* *If the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch.* Can the Ignorant teach others? Can those that, by their scandalous Lives, harden others, and turn the World *Atheists*, and make the Sacrifice of the Lord contemptible; can these, I say, be qualified Persons to build up in Holiness? Will the Army under Satan fight against their Leader? Will Satan fight against Satan?

*Reas.* 6. None hath Power to do an Action that is unlawful, or to sin: But, to ordain a godless ignorant Man to preach is sinful: Therefore none hath Power to ordain him, and, if they do, their Action is null; for what is done without Power is null.

*Reas.*

*Reas. 7.* If all the *Conformist's* Authority to preach proceed from the *Prelate*, and the *Prelate* not being an Officer of Christ, and, as such, ordaining, the *Conformist* is no Minister. But all the *Conformist's* Authority to preach doth proceed from the *Prelate*, as such. Or thus, none are Ministers but *Presbyters*: But *Conformists* are not ordained by *Presbyters*. I prove the *Assumption*: A *Prelate*, as a *Prelate*, is not a *Presbyter*; but the *Conformist* is ordained by a *Prelate*, as a *Prelate*; ergo, &c. The Major is clear, I prove the *Assumption*. Because, as a *Presbyter*, the *Prelate* acknowledgeth he cannot ordain; therefore he ordains as a *Prelate*; for, by the Principles of *Prelacy* established amongst us, all Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination is in the *Prelate*.

*Reas. 8.* The *Conformists* are Idol-Pastors, Hirelings; which are not the Shepherds of the Flock, *Ezek. xxxiv. 3. Zech. xi. 7. Wo to the Idol-Shepherds.* Now, likeas an Idol is the Similitude of the true God, set up and worshipped in the Room of God, and yet is not God, but nothing, *I Cor. viii. 4.* even so an Idol-Shepherd is the Representation or Likeness of the true Shepherd and Pastor, and is acknowledged in the Room of such, and is no such Thing, *John x. 12. Whose own the Sheep are not, and who is not the Shepherd of the Flock*; and hence, being an Idol, is nothing, and sure the Lord will not delude his People with nothing. Fancies, Dreams, and idle Forms without Substance, are as nothing to God.

*Reas. 9.* Every right *Presbyter*, constituted according to the Word, hath Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination in himself, as is acknowledged. But the *Curates*, that now preach under the *Prelate*, have no Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination, that being competent to the *Prelate* allenary; therefore he is no Gospel-Minister. All Christ's Ministers come out to us with that Power; and let



let it be considered, whether a Pastor without Jurisdiction be a *Presbyter*, or Officer appointed in God's House: All Christ's Officers are under himself immediately, and have no Medium to domineer over Brethren under him.

*Reas.* 10. If scandalous open Sins be sufficient, without Deposition, to unminister a Man, when obstinately continued in; then the *Conformists* (being obstinately scandalous) are no Ministers: But the first is true, *Acts* i. 25. 'Tis said *Judas fell by his Transgression from his Apostleship*. By Transgression is not meant Death; for so *Peter*, *Paul*, and all the rest, fell from it when they died: Besides, Death is improperly a Transgression. And, if ye ask, what Kind of Transgression will unminister a Man? I answer, The same Kind of Transgression which did unminister *Judas*, even the *Betraying of his Master*; and in this Respect the *Curates* and *Prelates* are very guilty. 'Tis true, the Word in the Original signifies, *He wandered and went from his Apostleship*; but the Sense is the same; and this is clear from it, that, while *Curates* are betraying their Master, and continuing in Rebellion against him, they are wandering, and not under the Line of his Authority, and wandering without, or from it, are not under it; and therefore, till they return, there should be no acknowledging of them.

*Conclus.* 2. A scandalous Person chosen to be a Minister, or a Minister having a fundamental Nullity in his Office, is still yet a Minister in the Consciences of the Lord's People, and by them acknowledged to be so, until his Nullity be declared there, that is, in their Conscience: For Conscience is a Court, and Things must be made out and intimated there, ere they be forensically so. For, as it is in outward Courts, so here, *de non existentibus, et non apparentibus, idem est judicium*; that is, *the Law judges Things that exist not, and Things that appear not, to be*  
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*the same*: I mean, when Diligence to gain Information hath been used.

*Conclus.* 3. As People are not to receive a scandalous Minister in a constituted Church, nor according to the Law is he a Minister; so he, returning from the evil of his Way, is to be acknowledged a Minister; for now that which was wanting being made up, and which only did incapacitate, there is no more a Nullity. Hence *Calvin's* and *Luther's* Authority were good to preach, when they turned *Orthodox*, and forsook the *Pope*, altho' I judge Popish Ordination to be insufficient in itself to constitute a Minister adequately. And this is according to my last Assertion.

*Conclus.* 4. A Minister lawfully chosen, yet a Steward's betraying his Master, and turning grossly and obstinately scandalous, doth *ipso facto* fall from his Apostleship and Commission, and is indeed, in the Sight of God, no longer a Minister; *Acts* i. 25. And having himself wandred so far from his Commission, and without the Reach of it, it is not to be supposed that the Lord continues or prorogates it, or him in it, but discharges him to take his Name in his Mouth, or, during his Uncleanness, to approach unto the Sanctuary.

*Conclus.* 5. In a constitute settled Church, tho' a Minister is known to be grossly scandalous, yet he is not altogether to be separate from, until Complaint be made to the Church, and he legally and juridically tried, and cast out; and during the Process, and until it be discussed, others may be heard. Or, it may be supposed, that in respect he is not obstinate in his Scandal, which is not till he reject the Admonition of the Church, which cannot be till Complaint be made to them, that this Scandal (not being obstinate) can give no Ground of Separation, but Sin obstinately continued in. The Putrefaction or Canker in an Arm, or any other Member of the Body,

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Body, doth not make us presently cut it off, till we see if we can heal it: But, if that cannot be done, and that 'tis incurable, and infects the whole Parts, then it is to be cut off. In a troubled persecuted Church the Case is otherways; because there are no Means left to try to cure it, nor will the Chirurgeons or Physicians apply any Thing, and therefore, for preventing farther Evil, cut it off; for 'tis only continued, to see if it can be healed: And therefore, when either there are no Means to heal it, or that Means are not able to heal it, it is to be cut off: And probably, for this Cause, in a constitute Church, a scandalous Minister may yet, by the Will of God, be kept in, notwithstanding of this fundamental Nullity, until he be legally tried and cast out. Likeas a constitute Church casts out and makes as a Heathen and Publican, and cuts off, because Means cannot heal all: So a troubled persecuted Church, forsaken of her spiritual Guides, cuts off or removes themselves, because they have no Access to Means to heal.

*Conclus. 6.* As for Acts done by the *Conformists* (such as Baptizing especially) they are not, in my Judgment, to be reiterated: For the Lord will not have his Name taken in vain; and we don't find Acts of that Kind reiterated in Scripture, even when illegally done; as in *Zipporah's* circumcising *Moses's* Children. And it may said, that the Lord's Silence with the Church's accepting such as have been baptized as such, and as Church-Members, doth ratify that illegal Act to the Pure, to whom their *Uncircumcision is counted Circumcision*; for I look on Baptism as a mere Seal, as Circumcision was. And seeing there is none to quarrel it, why should there be a Reduction? Besides, the Practice of the Church in *Athanasius's* Time, who, when a Child, baptized Three hundred Children, which was by the Council of Fathers ratified. And tho' Infestments should all pass under Notaries Hands, if yet a private Person,

who is not a Notary, give it, if either the Judges of the Law ratify it, and none strikes out to pursue it, he hath sufficient Title thereby to possess his Lands: So here. Yet I confess they speak with a great deal of Reason, who say they ought all to be re-baptized, seeing the Action is null; and what is the Hazard so to do? And that the Case is alike, as if a Devil did baptize; and that the same Grounds might lead the Church to ratify the Devil's Baptism, as the Baptism of Persons without Authority; and that the Church hath no Warrant to ratify such illegal Acts, but, being in themselves null, are in as great Capacity to reiterate them, as tho' they had not been done at all. I am not able, to Satisfaction, presently to answer all their Arguments, and therefore shall not contend with them much in it. Yet this must be granted likewise, that all these Children that deposed Ministers baptize, should also be re-baptized, which is yet contrary to their own Tenets: Yet, notwithstanding, I am more inclined to think it may be done, by either formal or implicit Ratification, as in civil Cases, in respect of the Want of a Precedency.

Against this Doctrine, and these Conclusions, especially the first, some Objections are started, which I shall endeavour briefly to answer.

*Object.* 1. Then could ye not hear a scandalous Minister if he continued obstinate; or, if the Church refused or neglected to censure him, even in *Presbyterian* Times, or when the Church is rightly constituted. *Ans.* I grant the Conclusion. What then?

*Object.* 2. Our Reformers and Predecessors did never ordain *de novo*, or re-ordain such as were ordained by either *Prelates* or *Papists*; therefore they thought them still Ministers: But, if the *Prelate's* Ordination be null, and our *Conformists* no Ministers in this Respect, as the *seventh Reason* would infer, then were neither *Luther* nor *Calvin*, nor the  
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most Part of the Ministers since the Beginning of Popery, no Ministers till now: Nay, never were there Ministers since the Apostles Time, because all had their Ordination from Rome, and from Prelates; and so Christ had no *Organical* Church since the Time of Popery.

I answer, (1.) No more were *Luther* and *Calvin* re-ordained, and yet is the *Whore* (Christ's greatest Enemy, that makes War with him) his Spouse. I say therefore, that our primitive Reformers, such as *Calvin* and *Luther*, returning again to, and zealously professing the Truth, made that which was null valid. And Mr. *Durham* saith expressly, in his Commentary on the xi Chap. of the *Revelation*, That the Popish Ordination in itself is not altogether sufficient to constitute a Church, but those who have renounced the Popish Hierarchy, and what is Antichristian in their Office, and professing the Truth of Christ, the former Ordination becomes and stands valid. 'Tis true, the Ministers of *London*, with some others, take much Pains to prove the Popish Ordination valid: And I own I differ from them, (not wanting Precedents in that) but, 'tis also true, that, as suspecting the Truth of that Answer, they run to this, that our first worthy Reformers were extraordinarily sent; which is the better Answer of the two, and to which I adhere; or to Mr. *Durham's* Answer to the Place forecited, as I have said in the third Conclusion. But,

(2.) Likeas *Presbyters*, now submitting to the *Prelate*, are accepted and admitted to that Charge, because of their Submission to him. For, in former Times, the *Prelatical* Persons that came unto *Presbytery*, that were ordained before by *Prelates*, by acknowledging their Guilt, and submitting to them, and renouncing the *Prelate* and his Ways, they *ipso facto* acquired a new Relation, and *Presbyterians* receiving of such, is interpretatively a Reduction:

tion: And from that Time their Acts flowed from a *Presbyterian* Authority, and not from the *Prelatical*; that ever more holding good, that all authoritative Acts in a Church do flow from the supreme Authority that is actually in the Church, whether *Episcopal* or *Presbyterial*. They need not therefore ordain them *de novo*, seeing, by their Submission to them, there was a new Commission taken, by which they were impowered to preach; for if it were not so, in case of Misdemeanour the *Presbyterians* could not depose them; for they might reply, We hold our Office from another, and not from you; and that which ye gave us not, nor we exercise by your Authority, ye cannot take from us: Nay, nor to cognosce on Acts flowing from another Authority. See what I have said to this in my Answer to the *Objection* proponed in the first Section.

*Object.* 3. against the 11th *Affertion*. Marriage with Unbelievers, Choosing of wicked Persons to be Magistrates, are all sinful Actions, and contrary to the Law; so was the Covenant made with the *Gibeonites*, *Exod.* xviii. 21. *Deut.* xvii. 16, 17. *Josh.* ix. 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. The Law discharged Marriage with Unbelievers; and commands to chuse Persons fearing God for Rulers: Yet all these Actions, when done, are not null: Therefore when the Conformists, being scandalous and wicked, are admitted to their Office, contrary to the Law, this doth not nullify their Office; but once admitted (tho' illegally) doth stand. This Objection is pungent, and I will answer it somewhat largely. Therefore I answer and say, (1.) In a Christian well-ordered Common-Wealth or Kingdom, none are to be chosen Rulers, but *Men fearing God*, *Exod.* xviii. 21. *Deut.* xvii. 19. and if otherways it be done they cannot answer to God for it. (2.) That such, when installed in their Places, and continuing to play mad Pranks, are to be thrust out again by those that have Authority so to do, see-  
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ing the Lord is not with them. And it is hard, upon account of any Alliance, to bear God's Feud. It should part dearest Relations, 2 Chron. xxv. 10. (3.) If they cannot be got out, yet are not Christians to go to Law before them, (except in Cases of desperate Necessity) but rather to suffer Wrong, 1 Cor. vi. 1. (4.) Yet is there not so great Ground to annul the Office of the one, as of the other, because, in secular Judges, *Piety* is required for the *Well-Being* of the Thing, not to the *absolute Being* of the Thing. An unjust Judge may be helped to pity a poor Widow; and his Ungodliness doth not *incapacitate* him *altogether* to attain the Ends of his Calling and Employment; yet is *Piety* *specially* required in a Minister, in respect, without running to Hell openly, by eating and drinking Damnation to himself, he cannot exercise his Office: For he cannot dispense the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (which is a Part of his Duty) without eating and drinking Damnation to himself, because he eats unworthily; when he comes and washes not, he dies; he destroys, with a vain flagitious Life and Conversation, what he builds in his Preaching; he causes and tempts People to abhor the Offerings of the Lord: And the better such Ministers preach, the greater Influence they have to turn Men Athiests. Why so? All is but Words that's talked anent Religion; they who press it most zealously, don't believe it. And let this be but considered, and I doubt not to say, but as good and better no Ministers at all, than such Ministers. I forbear their hardening of People with false and wrong Application of Doctrine, in saying, *There is Peace, when there is no Peace*, and saddening the Hearts of the Righteous; to all which they have an inward Principle of Enmity enclining them. What a sad Matter is it to be in the Hands of an unskilful Physician on Life and Death, and to put the Rod of Correction in a Fool's Hand? Were it not better to let God and Nature

ture deal on with them, 1 *Theff.* i. 5, 9—*What Manner of Men we were among you for your sake.* — *Ye turned to God from Idols, to serve the living and true God.* Acts xx. 18, 19, 20. The Shepherd should go out and in before the Flock, *John.* x. 3, 4. *Idol-Shepherds stand not in God's Council, and shall not turn People from Iniquity,* Jer. xxiii. 22. *Mal.* ii. 8. Likeas Impotency dissolves Marriage, tho' solemnized; so Impotency to attain the Ends of Preaching (*viz. Edification*) dissolves the Relation betwixt Pastor and People. (5.) *If the Unbeliever stay not, a Brother is not under Bondage in such Cases,* 1 Cor. vii. 15. So our *Curates* have not staid with us in our first Bond and Tye, but have run away to the *Prelate*; and therefore we are not now under Bondage to them. (6.) Granting such Actions to be unlawful, and contrary to the Law; yet the mutual Relations and Tyes are not loosed, because the Law allows and commands Cohabitation and Subjection afterwards, by which these Acts and Relations, tho' contrary unto the Law, and therefore at first null, may be said to be approven, and consequently ratified, and so made valid. It is not so with *Conformists*; because the Law, with Hue and Cry, pronounces them hated in the House of God, and cries to depose them, and no longer to be continued: And therefore, since there is no subsequent Act to approve them in their Instalment, but rather against them, being illegally entred, they are to be accounted no Ministers. But, (7.) and which doth cut this Argument by the Root, ye would consider, that civil Actions do respect a two-fold Law; a Law of Nations, or Civil Law, and a Moral Law: The one respects the *Legality* or *Civil Goodness* of an Action, the other the *moraletical Goodness* of it. Hence, when the Lord requires such and such qualified Persons to be chosen Judges, he requires this as their *moral Qualifications* of the Election, by which it would be accepted in the Sight  
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of God; and not as the *substantial Thing* to make it civilly valid, for this the Election hath from its own peculiar Laws: Thence, tho' Men be chosen contrary to the moral Command, yet the Election (tho' sinful) will stand in that Court which cognosces upon the civil or despotical Legality or Goodness of Actions. Hence Marriages, Contracts, Elections and civil Covenants, if not contrary to a judicial Law of the Kingdom, do all stand, and are in civil Force, tho' the Command, as to its moral Part, be violated: As is most manifest in *Marriages* with Unbelievers, and in the Covenant made with the *Gibeonites*, tho' morally sinful upon the Matter, (being contrary to an express Command) yet once made with them, it stood civilly, despotically, and ecumenically, there being a civil Right interposed therein. It was merely a civil Bargain and Compact betwixt two Nations, which its Defect, as to Morality, could not abrogate. Nor was this Covenant in Prejudice of another; for then it should civilly fail; for all civil Laws have their *salvo jure cujuslibet*; and therefore the Law commanding them to make no Peace with the *Gibeonites*, was not a civil or juridical Law, else an Act contrary thereunto should suffer a Reduction; and so consequently the Covenant made with the *Gibeonites* would have been null (they being, by the Laws and Constitutions of the Kingdom, incapable to do it:) But it was a moral Law, and a religious Qualification of their Covenants, wherein, for better escaping the Idolatries of the Nations amongst whom they were, they were commanded to make no Covenant with them, tho' with others farther off; and so, consequently, not in such Hazard to tempt, as, by reason of their Distance, *they* might. And hence, tho' this was violated, there was no civil Law broken: And this Covenant, made with them, was but sinful as to the *Manner*, not the *Matter*, when well examined.

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For the Matter of a civil Covenant is and may be the Manner of a moral Action anent it. Hence, if the civil Law exclude such a Family from Government, any Election of them is found null, being contrary unto a Law, because the legal Right is annulled thereby. And hence, under the New Testament, *Marriages with Unbelievers*, tho' morally sinful (being contrary to the Command, 2 Cor. vi. 14.) yet not being contrary to a civil Law of the Land, and itself being a civil Act, do stand civilly and legally. But, among the *Jews* (whose judicial Laws did prohibit Marriages with Strangers) when any Person did marry a Stranger, and it was quarrelled, it was a sufficient Ground of Divorce; as in *Nehemiah's* Time, who caused the *Jews* separate from the *strange Wives* they had married. But now, in spiritual Actions, such as are purely moral and ecclesiastick, such as *Ordination, Election*, and such like, which respect a moral Rule only, the Validity or Invalidity of such Actions is to be looked on according to their moral Rectitude. Likeas when the civil Law is substantially violated, the civil Action, wherein it is substantially violated, is null; so in moral spiritual Actions (their Legality consisting in their Morality) when that moral spiritual Law, by which they subsist, is substantially violated, the Pact of Action is null, because it hath no Legality, but a moral one, hence it is null. Hence Ordination being a spiritual ecclesiastick Act, and subsisting by a spiritual ecclesiastick Law, and answering thereunto, and noways subsisting by another civil Law, it ever must be conform substantially to that Law to which it answers, else by that Law it is null. And because, when wicked Ministers are ordained or continued, the moral ecclesiastick Laws of the Church incapacitating such to be chosen or continued Ministers, their Election or Ordination, being expressly contrary to the Law, is void and null.

*Object.*

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*Object.* 4. against the *second Conclusion.* (*viz.* When a Person is known to be obstinately scandalous, and unministred in the Consciences of the Lord's People, that to them he is no longer a Minister.) This were to turn the Rule to *Confusion*, to make every Man's *Fancy* his *Judge*, and to overturn *all Order*; and therefore ye cannot separate until the Church try him: For who made particular Persons Judges in this Case? For Answer to this, I shall refer to another Place, and recommend you to *Chap. 3. Sect. 3.* concerning the *Conformists Want* of a Commission.

S E C T. IV.

*Whether the Conformists Preaching be not a Sin?*

THE Cry of the *Conformists Abominations* is now so great, that it reaches to Heaven, so that 'tis doubted whether they ought to preach, even tho' it could not be proven that they were no Ministers. And therefore, to satisfy such who readily may not be convinced that they are not Ministers, for any Thing that is said, I will labour to prove, that their Preaching is sinful, not only as to the Manner of it, and accidentally, but that the Act, as 'tis circumstantiate, is sinful; and so sinful, that it ought not to be done. And therefore, for clearing of this farther, it would be considered,

I. That some circumstantial Defects do so far vitiate the Duty, as to wound it only, and not to destroy the Nature of it; in which Respect the Corruptions of Infirmity, that do attend the Duties of the Godly, do defile them: But so it is, their Duties cease not to be morally good, tho' not good according to the Law of Works, which requires perfect Obedience; yet evangelically good, and so accepted, and are no more Sin, altho' such Clay and Mud adhere thereunto, than the Waters which have Clay mixed with them are formally Clay, *Isa. lxiiv. 6.* called *Sins of holy Things*: Which Duties

being offered thro' Christ, thro' whom being strained, all their Saltness and Bitterness is purged away; as the Sea loses its natural Saltness and Brackishness, when percolated thro' the subterraneous Cavities of the Earth.

2. Some Defects do so defile a Duty, as to render it unacceptable in the Lord's Sight, so as not to be accounted *theologically* good, yet so as the Omission of it is not a Duty, but a greater Sin. Such are the Duties done by all unregenerate Persons, which, because proceeding from a corrupt cursed Fountain, and ending in Self, and not thro' Faith in Christ, *without which 'tis impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6.* are abominable in his Sight, *Prov. xxi. 27.* yet are they not so sinful, as the Omission of them is thereby more pleasing than if there be none performed unto God; which is clear in *Abah's Humiliation, Jehoahaz's Prayer,* and the rebellious *Jews* letting the Bond-Servants go free; so as they are some Way countenanced by him, tho' not with that peculiar Respect, *1 Kings xxi. 29. Jer. xxxiv. 14, 15. 2 Kings xiii. 4.*

3. Some sinful Defects do so vitiate the Duty, tho' moral, as the Omission of the Duty becomes less sinful, and less displeasing than the Performance of it as attended with such sinful Defects, so as the Omission is sinful; and the Doing of it, with such Circumstances, more sinful; and that is when they are gone about to cover their Lusts, and for Pretext, and with Resolution to continue in Sin and Prophanity, *Isa. i. 12, 13, 14. & lxvi. 3.* The Lord accounts the Duties of these People as no Duties, and as Murders, calling them *Iniquity, Ezek. xx. 39. Matth. xxiii. 14. Therefore they shall receive greater Damnation:* Yet are these Persons not freed from an Obligation to Duty.

4. Circumstances may so attend a Duty, materially considered, as not only to make the Exercise of

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of that Duty sinful, but the Suspension of it Duty. Hence Ministers following Christ's Practice, whom Hazard of Life may suspend to preach, *John xi. 54. & vii. 6.* The Christian is to leave his Gift at the Altar, and not to offer it, when his Brother hath ought to say against him, *Matth. v. 24.* And 'tis of this that the Question is, *viz.* Whether a *Conformist's* Preaching be not a greater Sin than his leaving off? Yea, and whether it be not positively a Duty to leave off? And for farther clearing of this,

5. Ye would know, that Duties are more hateful to God than the Omission, and ought to be suspended in these Cases. (1.) When the Duties or Ordinances are knowingly defiled with the Inventions of Men, *I Kings xii. 27, 28. Hof. iv. 12, 13.* And this being a Breach of the second Commandment; as we should not do Evil that Good may come of it, so we should not break the second Command to observe the first, *Hof. iv. 12. Isa. xlii. 17. Ezek. xx. 39.* for in that Case, 'tis no Ordinance, if not according to God's Mind. They, who sacrifice not at the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, sacrifice unto Devils, *Lev. xvii. 5.* (2.) When Acts of Worship are performed by a Person incapable to exercise that Worship, as in the Case of *Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and Uzziab.* (3.) Duties done merely hypocritically, and merely to cover their Sins from their Conscience and the World, become in the Sight of God a greater Sin than the Omission of them, *Prov. vii. 14.* and are so far from receiving a Reward, that they receive thereby *greater Damnation,* *Matth. xxiii. 14.* Better sit idle than perform Duties thus. 'Tis a wicked Perverting of Duties and Ends thereof, to make them Panders to Lusts, to deceive the Lord's People thereby, to enjoy some Privileges. To abuse the Creatures of Meat and Drink is sinful: But a great deal more sinful it is to prostrate the Ordinances of God to base Ends. And he that shall pray,  
hear,

hear, and go about other Duties merely for this End, to cover his Lusts, and to get Gain thereby, that Man's Duties are viler in the Sight of God than Drunkenness. The more excellent the Thing ye abuse is, the greater is your Guilt. (4.) Then the Duty, by Accident, becomes more sinful than the Omission, when foul Lusts are kept still; when Persons go to Duties, with Intentions to keep their Idols and Lusts; when all your Duties do not kill your gross scandalous Sins; and the Heart becomes secretly more hardened by Duty: And this is yet but a common Evil. Their Sins yield them Contentment and Satisfaction; and hence they will not, they cannot quit them; hence they pray, and drink on still; they pray, read and meditate, and swear on still, when any Advantage may be had; they hear, confer and pray, and yet are exceeding worldly, foolish, loose and frothy in Conversation; and their Duties give them Peace in Sin. But know that God will not hear Prayers, when Iniquities are regarded in the Heart, and more Thanks to let alone. *Bring no more such vain Oblations*, Psal. lxxvi. 18. *Isa. i. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.* God hates such Duties, regards them not, is weary with them as *Iniquity*, yea, as *Murder*, *Isa. lxxvi. 3.* To pray, preach and meditate, and yet thy Sloth, Worldliness, Pride, Vanity, Drunkenness and Perjury remain. Better not to pray at all, *Ezek. xx. 39.* It shall be more tolerable for Harlots and Publicans, than for you. This is betraying the Son of Man with a Kiss; to sit at his Table, and to lift up the Heel against him; to say, My Brother, and yet smite him on the fifth Rib. The whole World, except a few, lies guilty of this dreadful Sin. (5.) When there is no clean Door to come into this Duty; when Sin of Necessity must be Porter: Suspend then till God cleanse the Passage. Our Lie must not abound to his Glory. Wo to him that builds his Preaching on Blood or Perjury. Wo to

to him that maketh the Exercise of his Ministry flow from his Trampling on the Oath of God, *Hab. ii. 12.* The modestest Answer that my Thoughts can give, for the present, on the *Conformists* Preaching, is, to judge it the Reward of their Iniquity, and the Jeopardy of their Souls: And therefore every Act is most abominable in the Sight of God, that shall ever flow from this sinfully acquired Relation. (*Lastly*) I suppose positive publick Acts of Worship, in which these Persons are main active Agents, are to be omitted, while living under any gross Sin, that is scandalous, unrepented of, or unsatisfied for: Then they are in their Uncleanness, and should be separate until they wash their Clothes; they should throw the Mote out of their own Eye, ere they seek to take it out of their Brother's.

These Things thus premised, I answer to the present Question in two *Conclusions*.

*Conclus. 1. Conformists Sin in Preaching is greater than the Omission of it; and their personal Corruptions do so corrupt the Worship, as their Worship thereby becomes a greater Sin. (1.)* Because they continue still in their Sin and Abominations. *(2.)* Because they have an unclean Passage and Entry thereunto, it being built on their Perjury, as a Condition *sine qua non*. *(3.)* Because of their most corrupt and vile Ends, which are to get a Livelihood, and to maintain their Lusts, which are Hirelings Ends, and which I reckon such, *John x. 10. He cometh to steal.* *(4.)* Because of their open, manifest and ignorant profane Way in which they dispense these Ordinances, neither understanding what they say, nor in the least affected with it; and therefore horribly profane the Name of the Lord, *2 Sam. xii. 14.* Ye may learn from and hear Parrots as well.

*Conclus. 2. Conformists ought not to preach, but to suspend. (1.)* Because the Uncircumcised in Heart ought not to approach unto the Lord's House.  
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So saith the Scripture, *Ezek. xlv. 7. Jer. xlv. 5. Acts xxi. 28.* The *Conformists* are so outwardly and inwardly both. (2.) Because it is their Duty to leave off, as the rest have done; and therefore, without a Contradiction, it is not Duty to preach; otherways ye condemn such as have left off to preach. (3.) Continued Preaching is continued Submission; and continued Submission is continued Perjury; and continued Perjury is most unlawful; not a Time that he mounts the Pulpit, but afresh he perjures himself. (4.) They are to leave their Gifts before the Altar, because their Brother hath something to say against them for their Perjury: And therefore, before they can offer at the Altar, let them be reconciled to those whom they have justly offended, *Matth. v. 23, 24. Hof. viii. 6.* (5.) They have a Beam in their own Eye, which until they put out, how can they say to their Brother, *Let me pull out the Mote that is in thy Eye, Luke vi. 41, 42.* (6.) Because they are in their Uncleanness, and therefore should wash, and not pollute the holy Things of the Lord. A bodily Imperfection or Uncleanness did incapacitate the Sons of *Aaron* to minister unto the Lord, *Lev. xxi. 21, 22, 23. & xxii. 25.* Shall bodily Blemishes incapacitate Priests, according to the Law, to minister, and shall the known spiritual Uncleanness of our Curates not incapacitate them? *Doth God take Care for Oxen? Or hath he Pleasure in the Legs of a Man?*

I shall next remove some *Objections*. By what is said, ye may perceive that it is a Sin to *Conformists* to preach, and that they should suspend, and not preach.

*Object. I.* If this Argument hold good, then we cannot join with unregenerate Persons in Prayer, seeing their Sacrifice is abominable in the Sight of God: Therefore, tho' the *Conformist* sin in preaching, yet he is not to leave his Office, but to exercise it.

*Ans.*



*Ans.* (1.) Unregenerate Men are not to pray with Intention to continue in Sin. (2.) If they do, and yet be grossly scandalous, they sin more in praying than omitting. (3.) And, if this were known to others, they should not be joined with. And, when a Swearer or known Drunkard gives manifest Signs of his Intentions to continue in Sin, I question, whether we should hear him take the Name of God in vain, and abuse his Ordinances. (4.) It is not every Kind of Defect that will make a Duty to be suspended, or the Omission less sinful than the Doing of it: Nor is it of such Sinfulness we mean: But when the Duty becomes, by reason of Circumstances, necessarily sinful, so as it ought to be omitted and suspended, in that Case it should not be immediately gone about. Now, unregenerate Persons Prayers are not of this Nature, but are accidentally sinful, by reason of their Corruptness, and their Manner of going about them: But *Conformists* sin necessarily in preaching, it being impossible for them to preach as Things ly stated, tho' they should preach ever so zealously and sincerely: Because Preaching, as an Act of Office, is, antecedently to the *Conformists* exercising it, sinful, because from the *Prelate's* Authority; and therefore not to be meddled with. (5.) There is no such Reason for Omission of Prayer as Preaching, for Prayer is a Mean to convert and bring out of Sin, and a moral Duty tying all; hence all Persons, good and bad, are bound to it: Not so Preaching, which is peculiar only to some Men to go about, and determined by Law to such.

*Object.* 2. Idol-Shepherds are reprov'd for not preaching, *Ezek. xxxiv. 2.* *Should not the Shepherds feed the Flock?*

*Ans.* (1.) Some apply this to Magistrates; and if so, no Argument for it against us. (2.) These were Shepherds lawfully chosen, but unfaithful in the Management of their Office; and so the omitting  
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of the feeding of the Flock being their Sin; therefore preaching in Season, and out of Season, was their Duty. Likeas *Conformists* great Sin is Conformity to the *Prelate*; so renouncing of the *Prelate's* Authority, and casting it off, is their Duty; 'tis another Sin and Transgression *Conformists* are guilty of.

*Object. 3.* The *Conformists* some of them were not admitted contrary unto the Law, because, whatever they proved afterwards, they were something then; and being chosen thus, they ought to be continued, at least, until they be deposed.

*Answer,* The Forfeiture of their Office doth take place from the Time of their Rebellion and obstinate Treason, and not from the Time of the Sentence condemning as such. For as, in our Laws, one arraigned and convicted presently for Treason done twenty Years ago, he is not to be accounted a Rebel from the Time of his Sentence, but from the Time of his Rebellion; from which Time all Manner of Dispositions made by him are declared null. Hence our *Conformists*, as soon as they joined with the Lord's Enemies, did forfeit their Right to their Office, *Acts* i. 25.

*Object. 4.* *Judas* was a wicked Man, and so were *Eli's* Sons, and yet both allowedly continued in their Offices exercising them.

*Ans.* I deny *Eli's* Sons should minister in the Priest's Office; and whoever gave Sacrifice to them to offer, did sin, they being in the typical Uncleaness. And as for *Judas*, tho' he was a Hypocrite, and a wicked Man, and unregenerate, yet notwithstanding was an appearing Saint, and so, in the Judgment of the Church, a godly Man; for they go *secundum allegata et probata*; not so the *Conformists*, who are openly wicked.

## S E C T. V.

*When is Communion in Worship lawful, and when not?*

IT may be said, What doth all this Arguing prove? None denies that *Conformists* sin in preaching, but themselves. But, tho' it be unlawful in them to preach, may it not be lawful for us to hear them, who are not guilty of the same Things which make them sin in preaching. For clearing of this sufficiently, I will, in the Lord's Strength, enquire into this Question, *viz.* Supposing the active Administrators sin in dispensing Ordinances, whether, and when doth it infer Guilt in the Hearers? For clearing of this, take these *Affertions*.

*Affer. 1.* The Dispensers of the Ordinances may sin grievously in the Lord's Sight, so as to render the Sacrifice Iniquity unto themselves, when those that be with them may be free and spotless; which comes to pass when that which defiles the Worship is unknown unto the Joiners: In which Case being pure, *all Things are pure to them*, Tit. i. 15. To receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the Hands of a graceless Minister, with a Company of Hypocrites, when neither the Hypocrisy of the one or other is vented, but covered with a Cloke of outward Profession, I say, defiles the Ordinance to themselves, but not to the Joiners. Hence, if it be granted that *Judas* did eat the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it was polluted to him, but not to the rest of the Disciples.

*Affer. 2.* To join with Hypocrites and unregenerate Men, in such Acts of Worship as all are bound to do as Men and Creatures, tho' known and suspected not to be regenerate, tho' their Sacrifice be unaccepted in the Sight of God, whether Praise or Prayer; I say, To join with them, in such a Case, is not Sin. *Saul's* Duties were not acceptable in God's Sight, yet it was no Sin in *Samuel* to join with him, 1 Sam. xv. 31. 1 Cor. xiv. 23. When an Unbeliever comes

into a Christian Church, the whole Church is not for this to leave the Exercise; and the Ground is, because they are bound to such Creatures, and we are to help them to their Duty. And the Sinfulness of their Duty is but accidental, and the Duty is a Mean to bring them out of the Pit. And the Lord is better pleased with this, than with the omitting of it; and when the Evidence of their Unregeneracy is not so clearly made out, we may assist them. These Corruptions are merely personal, not official.

*Affer. 3.* Yet it is more safe we be passive in joining, than active; and it is more safe we be joined with by them, than that we actively join with them, even tho' they come in to pray and sing, *2 Thess. iii. 15.* Yet when they shall usurp the Chair, it is sinful, *Fer. xv. 19.* *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* In this Case they rather join with thee than thou with them, *Mal. ii. 7.* Regenerate Men are the Lord's Mouth and Messengers, at whom others are to enquire concerning the Law. Hence, if Christians be in the Act of receiving the Lord's Supper, if a known scandalous Person come in amongst them, and sit down, let them not care for it; for altho' he comes to thee, yet not thou to him.

*Affer. 4.* All personal Presence of an unlawful Act is not sinful; tho' *Mary* was present when *Christ* was suffering, yet it doth not follow that she did countenance that Act. To be present at the Martyrdom of a Saint, is not sinful, when neither done with Delight, nor as Assistant in it; but to hear a Word of Exhortation from him, and to attend his Body, and to learn by his Example to receive the Cross of Christ. The Apostles countenanced the *Jewish Feasts*, but did not join with them; but because such Occasions did draw a Multitude together, to whom, as Servants of Christ, they might declare their Commission. To be present at a Court, will not make me a Member of

of that Court. *Elijah's* Presence at the Sacrifice of *Baal* was no Sin. And therefore, it without Scandal it might be done, to hear *Conformists* occasionally, on Week-Days, were no Sin.

*Affer.* 5. Personal Guilt in the Dispenser contracts Guilt in the Joiners, in these Cases. (1.) When the Worship, in its Substance, is unlawful. As when Men preach Error and Blasphemies, and when the Ordinances are polluted with the Inventions of Men, then are all guilty; and the Lord will take Vengeance on such Inventions, *Psal.* xcix. 8. Hence, to hear a toothless Service-Book, to kneel at receiving the Sacrament, to baptize Children with the Sign of the Cross, is sinful. Hence they go up to *Bethaven* or *Giagal*, *Hof.* iv. 15. Hence, in *Jeroboam's* Time, the *Levites* fled unto *Jerusalem*, when the Worship was corrupted, *2 Chron.* xi. 13, 14. (2.) To hear a scandalous Minister preach, when others may be heard, is no doubt sinful: For the best is still to be chosen. (3.) When the Scandals are such as rest not on the scandalous Man's Person, but have Influence upon his Office, by which he doth these Acts, then joining with them is sinful: Because, if the Authority be sinful, Acts proceeding from that Authority must be likewise sinful and defective. Hence, if a Man, out of his own Head, not ordained, shall take upon him to preach authoritatively, or if ordained not by a lawful Authority, his Preaching is sinful; and those who hear him sin likewise. (4.) When the Faults are of such a Nature, as they either make the Dispenser's Service more abominable than his omitting, or when Circumstances are so, that it becomes Duty to let it alone; in which Respect, tho' the Duty, in its specifick Nature, be good, yet, in its individual Existence, is sinful: In that Case it is unlawful to join. And, whenever it is unlawful for him to preach, and known to be so, it is likewise unlawful in us to join: For they are Relatives, and his Preaching, as being  
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now circumstantiate, being Sin, we should not, by our Presence, countenance it, more than any other sinful specifick Act. And whatever the Lord hates, we should not countenance. (5.) When the Passage is foul, then it is our Duty to forbear, and not to join: This is to countenance Mocking. Or, when we cannot join, requiring some sinful Tye of us, or, by joining, declaring ourselves materially involved with them, with whom we should not join: For it is, in that Case, the Reward of our Iniquity, the *Price of an Whore*. We are not to do Evil that Good may come of it. (6.) When the Evils flowing naturally from it, and *per se*, are of greater Consequence than the Act of Worship itself; in that Case the Duty, in its specifick Nature, is individually unlawful *hic & nunc*; as if the Hearing of a godly Minister be Duty, yet, if I knew that there were Men in the Church lying in wait to kill me, it were not my Duty then to hear. And so, if the Evils that naturally arise from Hearing be very great, *viz.* their hardning and strengthening of the Government, grieving and condemning the Godly: In that Case it is unlawful to join with them.

*Object.* But these *Pollutions*, wherewith the *Conformists* are defiled, are Scandals accidental to the Duty, and not intrinsical, and therefore cannot be a Ground for Separation; no more than the Faults of a Master of a Family can be a Ground for you to withdraw from him in his Family-Exercise and Worship.

I answer, by denying the *Conformists* Defects to be merely personal, but do reflect on the Duty itself, and are intrinsick to it: For publick Administring in the Lord's Name is a Duty in itself unseasonable, during the Person's Uncleanness that doth minister; not so the Duty of Prayer, which is a Well wherein to wash Filth away, and a Mean for that End; and hence the one is seasonable, not the other; which doth presuppose, ere the Duty be accepted, that the  
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Person be clean, and is never laid upon unclean Persons, as Prayer is; for *Simon Magus* is commanded to pray. And yet, in Prayer itself, if the Person that is to pray, be known to come with an Intention to utter his Wickedness thereby, or for other unlawful Ends, I think it is not lawful to join with him, no more than in a sinful Action: For his Duty and Prayer, in this Case, is turned to be Sin to him, not by any Filthiness accidentally following, but antecedently going before, and polluting the Duty, as soon as ever it comes out, being forestalled. And hence, if he get any Good, as it sometimes comes to pass, as in *Acts ii.* yet this is but accidental.

S E C T. VI.

*Whether may we withdraw from any in a private Conversation, and yet cannot withdraw from them while in the Exercise of their Offices?*

WHEN Testimonies of Scripture for a lawful Separation are sought, we are ordinarily twitted with this Distinction of a personal Conversation, and an official Conversation. And hence they say, We may withdraw from Ministers in a personal Conversation, if they be scandalous, and yet join with them in the Exercise of their Office. Others say, We may separate from their Faults, but not from their Persons. But this last is so false, that it needs no Refutation: For thus are we to do from the least Sins in the Godly; and then in Conversation we shall make no Difference. And, for the first, I affirm that this Distinction is groundless, and that it is never lawful to separate in a personal Conversation from any Person, but when it is Duty to separate from him likewise while in the Exercise of his Office.

For the Clearing of this, two Things would be opened. (1.) That the Law of God, neither explicitly nor implicitly, by Precept or Example, doth allow this Distinction. (2.) That there is no Ground in the

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the Law of Separation that may infer the one by the other. And, for the first, I see neither Law nor Example warranting it; and, when our Adversaries shall shew it, we shall yield. And, for the second, I find that all the Scripture-Grounds and Reasons of Separations strike equally against both. Let us then humbly enquire from the Scripture, whether the Reasons inforcing a personal Separation be not alike cogent for inforcing an official Separation, seeing the Reason of the Law is the Life of the Law. Or, let us enquire, whether there may not be some Reason moving us to countenance such, while in the Exercise of their Office, that doth not inforce a personal Separation.

The *first Reason* that is given for Separation, is that in 2 Cor. vi. 14. viz. That the Lord cannot so abundantly manifest himself, till these Strangers be removed; and therefore it is promised, He will be their God, and their Father, if they touch not the unclean Thing. And hence we find the Lord Jesus did never so kindly communicate himself to his Disciples, as when *Judas* was away, *John* xiii. 31. And, I pray, is not the Lord's Presence as like to be clouded, when a scandalous Man preaches, as when he converseth in private. There are now sad Confusions and Clouds on the Spirits of the Lord's People: And I know nothing hath greater Influence on it, than our being in the *Tents of Kedar*. And I am persuaded, if Professors would turn from all that want the Power and Life of Godliness, but only when admonishing, rebuking and testifying against them, the Lord would shortly manifest that he is our Father. Ye go mourning for Want of the Lord's Presence, but, depend on it, it is not in *Babylon* that he will be found.

*Reason 2d.* that is given for Separation, is, because it is inconsistent that *Christ* should have Fellowship with *Belial*. And thus I argue. If *Christ* cannot have Fel-



Fellowship with *Belial and Darknes*, How can ye join in a spiritual Bond and Relation with wicked Men? Lift yourselves as Sheep, and be convinced that Hearing makes a visible Son of *Belial* your Shepherd? And, I am perswaded, this Ground maketh more against an official Conversation, than a personal; for a personal Conversation may be without any Bond or Union; the Scripture forbids such a Joining as imports a Yoke; for Christ was personally present and did converse with Hypocrites and open Enemies, yet had no yoked Fellowship with them. Likeas therefore Christ had no Fellowship with *Belial*, which is the Ground and Reason of the Law, it doth not exclude a personal Conversation mainly, but an official, which cannot be so conveniently conceived without a Yoking; so, on this Ground, is an official Conversation rather to be shunned than the other.

*Reason 3d.* That such as we shun to converse with may be ashamed, 2 Thess. iii. 14. And doth any Man know, that our forbearing to hear them, renders them as much Objects of Scorn, and makes themselves ashamed, more than withdrawing in a personal Conversation, and is more noticed and discerned by them? And truly it is probable, that, if all the Lord's People should leave the *Conformists*, so as none should haunt them, but the merely civil, ignorant, or profane, this would occasion a strange Alteration. But alas! ye that frequent them in Ordinances, are the Stumbling-Block of their Iniquities; ye are they which secretly keep them in the Snare of the Devil. And it secretly hardens them, that the Fearers of God receive the Law and Instruction at their Mouth, and does not let them apprehend their Condition to be such as indeed it is. Ah! think, for Compassion's Sake, what ye are doing; ye fill their Mouths with Arguments, and their Hearts with more Malice against the Fearers of God, who dare not join with them, seeing they are not only condemned by the *Cu-rates*, but by the Practice of the Godly, and their own Friends.

*Reason 4th*, that is given in Scripture for Separation, is, *Left they leaven the whole Lump*, 1 Cor. v. 6. And do not they thus when they preach? Oh! to see what Contempt they subject the Ordinances of Christ unto; and how meanly Persons are tempted to think of them, while handed out by such Dispensers; and how Men *scumier* and *ugg* at their Meat, being conveyed to them thro' and in such Vessels, 1 Sam. ii. 17. Better for many hundred poor Souls to hear no Sermon at all, than hear such Wretches, *dawbing with untempered Mortar; crying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace*; so that nothing damns more than sewing Pillows under their Arm-pits. I know and believe the *Curates* Preaching hath had more Influence on the Damnation of poor Souls, than on the Converting of them, since the *Prelates* came in. Would it not grieve any tender Heart, to see a Multitude under God's Wrath and Curse, ready every Moment to drop into Hell, and perhaps their own Consciences telling them this much, and so in some Measure awakned, gathered, and lulled asleep again by these *Idol-Shepherds*? So that what the King of *Israel* said, when he was to fight with the *Moabites*, may be said with a heavy Heart, That *God had called the Multitude together to be destroyed*. If the Devil had been studying a Way to turn the World *Atheists*, this it it; and he could not have fallen on a better. Take a carnal Man, whose Conversation should refute his Doctrine, and set him in a Pulpit, to cry up Holiness, What would the poor People think, but that Religion is a Stage-Play, in which the Actors seem to be serious? I forbear to mention the ridiculous Doctrines they now and then raise their impertinent Applications upon, and their Wipes, Taunts and Blasphemies against the *Covenant and Work of Reformation*.

*Reas. 5th*. Left partaking of Men's Sins, by Union with them, tho' not doing the same Acts, they partake of their Punishment, Rev. xviii. 4. And hereby do they partake of their Sin. *John* saith, (2 *Epistle*

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10, 11. by receiving them to our House, we bid them *God-Speed*. But truly, by hearing of them, we lay an Obligation on ourselves to bid them *God-Speed*, and do more than receiving them to our own House, even to maintain them: *For, if we receive of his spiritual Things, (as the Apostle saith) should we not minister to him in our carnal Things?* And is not our Hearing a greater Countenancing than saying *God-Speed*? We are Partakers with them in their Sins, when we are actually imbodyed with them in one Union. And therefore, I say, *Come out of Babylon*, lest, staying there, ye partake of their Sins, being Members of the whole Body, and so partake of their Punishment. And, if we should separate from *Babylon*, lest we should be destroyed in their Calamity, Why not from Prelacy? The Apostle (1 *Tim. v. 22.*) forbids *sudden laying Hands on any*, lest they be Partakers of their Sins by their Union with them; from which a Communication of Actions (tho' not physically, yet morally) doth proceed. Shall not our Hearing of them, and by that establishing them, and ratifying their Ministry, unite us to them, and render us guilty and legally liable to the Punishment due to them, as all *Israel* was punished for *Achan's* Fault? And the Fault of one is imputed to all *Israel*; for, (saith the Lord) *Israel hath sinned*. Renounce them, then, as ye would be free of their Punishment. So that, these Things duly considered, I see no Reason brought against a personal Conversation with them, that stands not against Hearing of them.

*Object. 1.* Preaching is an Ordinance of God, and therefore to be countenanced, tho' *Hophni* and *Phinehas* should be Dispensers of it. I answer, and so is private Meeting and Speaking to one another, *Heb. x. 25. Mal. iii. 16.* And a Minister is bound to converse privately with his Flock, as well as publickly to preach to and teach them. And what Ground to shun him while in the Exercise of one Duty belong-

ing to his Office, and not in another? If in the greater ye respect him, why not in the lesser? He that is capable to preach publickly, is, by the same Authority, capable to speak privately: And he that commanded the one, commanded the other.

*Object. 2.* I am not to entertain needless Conversation with any Man, so neither with him. I answer, No more are ye with Saints. And, if ye say, ye mean of a strict Familiarity; true, but very unconsentant to your Principles: For with whom should I be more intimate, than with my spiritual Guide, Father and Shepherd? I hear him, and get Light and Comfort from him in publick, Why should I not get the same from him in private? And why may not I unbosom all my Soul to him? And then I doubt not but ye should hear excellent Sense from many of them. And truly, tho' ye withdraw from him, as to an inward intimate Communion, this will never make him *ashamed*. Therefore I conclude, seeing scandalous Sins separate personally, they do so officially. I cannot see how a Man, being a Church-Member, can countenance a Brother in Office, and yet not keep Communion with him. Ye will say, I judge him no Christian, and therefore forbear Fellowship. Alas! alas! and is he a Minister and yet not a Christian? Likeas therefore Ordination (according to you) gives any Person a Right to preach, and so to you to hear, so likewise his Baptism and Profession, by which he is admitted a Church-Member, give him a Right to enjoy Church-Fellowship and Christian Communion. As therefore the Curate's continued Pastorship and Ministry doth ty you to hear, so his continued Brotherhood gives you a Warrant to converse with him. If therefore, on the other hand, his continued Membership will not be able to procure him the Benefit of Christian Converse, no more will his continued Ministry give Power to hear him.

*Object.*

*Object.* 3. But they edify in publick, and do not so in private, but spend the Time in frothy unprofitable Talk. I answer, and truly sometimes they edify very little in publick. But what do ye know that they will not edify in private, when ye run from them? Ye should try them. But (2.) this is not the first Ground of Separation, but a Consequent accidentally happening, and which may ground a Separation from others that have not so backslidden. For, if those who presently disown the *Prelate*, and profess for the Work of Reformation, spend the Time in idle frothy Talk, and cannot be got to talk of edifying Subjects, (as, alas! alas! there is too much of it, and in which I think Professors are most defective of any Duty I know.) If those, I say, be not profitable in Discourse, they were to be let alone as to private Fellowship, seeing they but spend Time.

*Object.* 4. It is not a *spiritual* Communion with Saints, or others, we mean, when we say we should separate in a private Converse and Communion, but of a *civil* Converse and Communion, and therefore not to eat or drink with them. I answer, with Reverence to these learned Men that think so, I think this makes the Matter still worse: For I deny that a Fault can be a Ground of Separation in a civil Converse, when our Calling and Business lead us to have ado with them: And, if we have no Call, either civil or spiritual, to lead us, then we should not join with any Society. Civil Fellowship is founded on civil Calls: And to spend Time *merely* with any Person whatever, is unlawful.

*Object.* 5. A civil Judge may be a wicked Man, and yet the Law be dispensed by him; and so we may sit and plead before him, tho' we cannot have a particular Fellowship with him. Therefore we may acknowledge a Person in his Office, when we are to disown him in his Conversation. I answer, It doth not follow; because a legal moral understanding Man  
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is the Subject capable of the civil Office; and, if Piety be required, it is to the *better Being* of the Thing, not to the *simple Being* of it. But Piety, at least the sober and serious Profession of it, is essentially required in a Minister, as that without which he cannot officiate to any Purpose in his Office; there is required Knowledge, else the Blind should lead the Blind; Acquaintance with God, that what he hath received of the Lord he may give to others; there is a holy Life and Conversation, else how shall he go in and out before the Flock? else he would destroy what he builds by his Doctrine. Ministers are the *Salt of the Earth*; and, if they lose their Savour, what serve they for? Matth. v. 13. But (2.) I distinguish the Consequent: Therefore we may acknowledge a Person in his Office, and disown him in his particular Converse, when these two are specifically distinct, and are founded on different Relations and Grounds. It is true, and I grant it. But that we may separate from a Person in private Converse, and yet acknowledge him in the publick Exercise of his Office, when both his publick Exercise and private Communion do flow and proceed from one Ground, I deny. Now, in this Case, the Ground is not the same; for it is a civil Relation that ties to hear the civil Judge, and to plead before him as a Member of the Kingdom, which Relation not calling me in private, I therefore forbear: And, if it should, as in the Case of soliciting, I might go, upon the same Grounds, to him privately likewise. But, as to spiritual Officers, it is one Relation that founds my Conversation, both publick and private, and therefore cannot separate from them in one, and not in another. (3.) This shews the Weakness of their Argument: For, tho' a Judge were excommunicate, and no Church Member at all, yet might we plead the Law before him: And yet we could not hear an excommunicate Minister preach. And therefore that which doth d.nude the one, doth not denude the other:

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Therefore, likeas the Censures of the Church do not divest a civil Person of his Office civil, altho' it doth of spiritual Offices; so neither can the Want of any Qualifications needful for a spiritual Office, infer any Incapacity to act as a civil Judge.

*Object. 6th and last.* I may separate personally and privately from one, when I cannot do it publickly, because I am Master of my private Actings, and they fall under a private Cognizance: But, in Matters of publick Concernment, such as, when a Man is exercising his Office, I am not Master: And therefore I may separate privately, when, without the Consent of others interested, I cannot do it publickly. I answer, In every Place and Station a Man hath a Judgment of Discretion: *For the spiritual Man judgeth all Things:* And therefore, tho' the Argument prove, I cannot do ought unto others, and cause them go alongst with me, without their mutual Consent; yet I may order myself as to my personal Carriage, even in publick Actings. For, tho' I be in a publick Station, yet I may give my private Advice, and act personally. And (2.) this holds well in a troubled State of the Church, when there is no Judicatory we can own; and when those, with whom we joined, have abandoned and deserted us, and left us to shift for ourselves; In this Case we may refuse to do any publick Thing which is wrong, if they corrupt the Judicatories, and found them contrary to the Word of God, or corrupt the Worship, or officiate by another Authority: In this Case, when I cannot have the Conveniency of another Minister, I may, tho' the Worship be publick, and the Judicatories publick, personally withdraw from it. And this is a personal Act reaching unto and terminated on myself alone, (tho' it hath a transcendental Relation to others) and not a publick Act. For, if this Divinity should hold, I were bound, being a Member of a Corporation, to sit  
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with them, and to join in all their wicked Acts, seeing I cannot withdraw without the Consent of others. (3.) And the Argument will yet alike strike against a personal Conversation, as against an official Conversation: For personal Conversation and Communion is a relative Duty, in which all the Members of the Society are mutually interested to one another to perform, and therefore cannot be dispensed with, (if that Reason hold) without the Consent of the Persons with and betwixt whom the Relation or Tye is, no more than the other; and might be censured or rebuked for withdrawing positively, and shunning private Communion with Members of Christ, by the publick Judicatories; yea, as in the Sentences of Excommunication, it appears that private Fellowship is a Matter within the Cognizance of the publick Judicatory, seeing they discharge it to be used with the Excommunicate: And therefore we are not so wholly Master of our private Actings, as they come within the Reach of the publick Authority likewise, as the *Objection* pleads.

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## C H A P. III.

*Containing Arguments against hearing the Conformists.*

## S E C T. I.

*Wherein the first Argument, from 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c. is handled.*

**H**AVING opened an Entrance to the Question; and clearing of it by Resolution of the former Questions, I come next to lay down some formal and direct Arguments for proving that it is unlawful to hear *Conformists*. The first whereof is drawn from 2 Cor. vi. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers, &c.* Which, because of the many  
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Cavils of Adversaries, fighting to eschew what is against them, and the large Stretching of Separatists, I will endeavour, in the Lord's Strength, to explain, as to its Meaning and Scope. I shall not now insist upon the various Expositions of Interpreters; some applying it to Marriage only; some to ordinary Converse; some to professed Pagans; and some only to a withdrawing from sinful Acts, tho' not from Persons. Now, for clearing of the Truth, and what is meant by *unequal Yoking*, and what by *Unbelievers*, take the following *Affertions*.

*Affer. I.* All Kind of Fellowship with graceless Persons is not here forbidden. For (1.) there is a natural Fellowship that Persons must have one with another, or *else go out of the World*, 1 Cor. v. 10. e. g. *Elijah's* witnessing against *Baal's* Prophets did not clash with this. (2.) Fellowship with unregenerate Men in Acts of Worship, suitable to their State and Condition, is not sinful: Hence we may pray and hear with them, especially when they are passive. We are all, as Creatures, under God's Law united under this Tye of serving God, and our Communion may flow from this. And 'tis a hard Thing to call a Man a Child of *Belial*, that is going to pray, who, by a suitable Conversation, doth witness the Reality of his Intentions, altho' secretly he may be a *Hypocrite*. (3.) To join or keep Company with unregenerate Men, when our Callings lead us to it, is not sinful. Hence Christ, being a spiritual Physician, justified his spiritual Converse with sick Publicans and Sinners, seeing he was, by his Office, called thereunto, *Matth. ix. 12*. And so many Ministers, and other Christians, do that charitable Office of instructing, warning and exhorting the most vile. So Physicians may administer Physick to the most scandalous Persons; so likewise this may take Place in civil Callings. (4.) Nor is he forbidden these Duties of Respect, Service and Commerce, that may flow

flow from Relations natural and civil, as these of Man and Wife, Master and Servant, King and Subject, Parent and Children.

*Affer.* 2. All unequal Yoking is not here forbidden, when the Inequality doth terminate upon the Persons, as in themselves absolutely considered, rather than as related in their respective Ties. Such a Commerce as doth import a Yoking, is here forbidden; but all Commerce, importing an unequal Yoking, is not here forbidden. For I suppose none will question but I may settle in a civil Society and Corporation with a wicked Man, if he have Qualifications fitting him for his Office, for the Management of which I join with him, so long as his Want of Holiness is not a Hindrance to the common Ends prosecuted by us. I may live in one Common-Wealth with a wicked Man. I think a godly Citizen in a Council is not to leave his Office, tho' a wicked Citizen be set in with him in Council. I may live in an University, and submit to the Laws thereof, tho' I have lewd Condisciples and Masters. *Paul* did not renounce his Burghship in *Tarsus*, and the Privilege of a *Roman*, tho' the People were *Heathens*. Servants cannot always quit their Masters, tho' unregenerate; a poor Man a rich Woman, &c *contra*. Those that have little and those that have much Grace may marry together; and yet here there is no unequal Yoking.

*Affer.* 3. Some unequal Yoking with Unbelievers is here forbidden. *Queritur*, What Fellowship and Yoking is here forbidden? I answer, (1.) All Fellowship with Sin, or the *unfruitful Works of Darknes*; *Eph. v. 11.* (2.) Separation from wicked Persons, as well as their Sins and Evils, is here forbidden. And hence; *Be not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers*; not only with their Unbelief, but with their very Persons: And hence, *Come out from among them*, else they will never be *ashamed*;

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ed; otherways ye put no Difference betwixt the Godly and them, from whose Sins of Infirmities ye must separate. (3.) By *Unbelievers* is not meant only open *Heathens*, and professed *Pagans*, *Arians*, *Papists* and *Turks*, but also it comprehends titular *Christians* and *Protestants*; for the Command is general, *Christ and Belial*, *Light and Darknes*: Wicked graceless Professors may have *Darknes* as much as *Heathens*. *Darknes* and *Belial* are as incapable of Concord in a *Protestant* as in a *Papist*; and the same Prejudices attend both. God careth not for Names and Shadows. There may be some professing *Christ*, who may be worse than *Infidels*, and, by their Works, deny the Faith. 'Tis of such *Unbelievers* as are known really to have *Belial* in them, that this is meant. Mocking of God by a fruitless Profession will not still the Devil, nor agree these two. (4.) There is here forbidden a seen and discovered unequal Yoking. Hence Suspensions will not do it, nor, in fine, all Sins, but such as import Satan reigning, and cannot be supposed to consist with Sincerity. (5.) We are not only, by this, forbidden to enter into Yoke, but also to continue in Yoking. Hence is that Word, *Come out of her*. Not only is *Union* at first forbidden, but also *Communion* flowing from that *Union*. *Communion* with *Belial* is as unseemly as *Union* with *Belial*. Only let it be known that it is *Belial*. Hence there may be *Communion* with *Hypocrites*, because they are not known to be the *Children of Belial*. (6.) All such unequal Yoking in Fellowship with Persons, when they are not capable to attain the Ends of it, is in vain, and consequently unlawful: Because the Ends of a spiritual Combination are spiritual and holy; and therefore an obstinate graceless Wretch can never jointly prosecute them. This Principle is so engraven in Nature, that I think 'tis needless to prove it, *Luke xiv.*

28—33. If we build, we must see if we be able to attain the End of Building: So here, (7.) all unequal Yoking in such Bonds of Fellowship with Persons, in which there can be no Peace or Concord expected, is unlawful: For this is contrary to the very Nature of Union. Hence this is made an Argument, *What Concord hath Light with Darknes?* For, if there be no Agreement, there cannot be a joint Prosecution of the Ends of their Society and Combination. For, however Saints and wicked Persons, in other Combinations, agree, such as lead to the Conservation of civil Societies, yet they cannot be expected to agree rationally in a spiritual Tye, in respect, in that very Thing and Tye in which they are bound, they are acted by contrary Principles, seeking to overthrow one another; the one seeking to advance the Interest of Christ, and the other seeking to destroy it; and hence cannot be united in a Combination tending to that Purpose: And hence the Work of God, by continual and multiplied Divisions in Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions, was always hindred. The Mystery is, *Christ and Belial* were yoked: And I look upon this as one great Cause of all the Evil that we have seen; and therefore, when this is evidently seen, and no Hopes left to help, we should have separated. Will ever Satan help against Satan? They are contrary. Extremes in this, *viz.* in Holiness, tho' in other Things they may agree; and they oppose one another, as Heat and Cold doth. (8.) When there is an Unsuitableness in the Extremes to the Relation; as when unholy visible Members of Satan are taken into a holy Union; it is unsuitable there should be Correspondence in these Things. The Relation of Saints should not be heterogeneous: 'Tis God's great Promise, *I will give one Heart.* A holy and spiritual Fellowship and Work, and unholy Members, are unsuitable. *Holiness becometh*

*cometh thine House, O Lord, for ever, Psal. xciii. 5.*

(9.) All intimate Fellowship with graceless visible Members of Satan is here forbidden. Hence it is not lawful to marry with them; because 'tis a near Union, and hath Influence. If we should unite, it should be in such Relations and Tyes as may suffer a tolerable Distance in Converse. (10.) Such unequal Yoking is here forbidden, that draws down more Prejudice than it doth Good. Hence there should be no Association with the Enemies of God, while God is not with them, but his Curse, and therefore will curse the Cause. For this is the Due of every wicked Man, *Cursed be thou in every Work thou settest thy Hand unto*, however it actually and eventually fall out otherways, *Deut. xxviii. 20.* And what Wisdom is it to join with such Plagues, and to take such Moths into our Bosom? The Wicked are a Family that have Consumption in them, with which they infect all their Relations. God hides his Face from them; he curses them and their Works. (11.) When it is with Persons whose Blemishes are such as thereby the Worship is polluted and corrupted, 'tis unlawful. And hence there should be no Drinking with such fat Sheep, because they have not only defiled the Waters, but also push with their Horns. And I would add, (12.) That this unequal Yoking is rather meant of, and restricted to an actual unequal Yoking, than to any aptitudinal, fundamental, denominative Union, that may be betwixt the Lord and such gross Persons.

These Things being thus premised, I come to draw some Arguments from this Scripture against Hearing the *Curates* or *Conformists*.

The Argument then runs thus. It is unlawful to join in spiritual Fellowship with such as are Children of *Belial* and *Unbelievers*, or, when joined, actually to continue Communion with them. But the *Con-*  
*formists*

*formists* are such ; *ergo*, it is unlawful to join or continue in actual Fellowship with them. But Hearing is a Joining with them in spiritual Fellowship ; therefore Hearing of them is unlawful. This is a *Prosyllogism*. (1.) That the *Conformists* are *Children of Belial* and *Unbelievers*, is clear from their Fruits, by which our Lord saith we shall know them. They do the Works of Satan and Darkness. Look back to *Chap. I. Sect. 2. Paragraph 2.* where this is proven. And,

(2.) That such should not be joined with in spiritual Fellowship, consider but these Things following.

1. Because we cannot attain the Ends of Union and Communion with such ; therefore it is an egregious Folly either to enter into or continue in Communion with them. The Consequence is clear from Nature.

I prove the Antecedent thus. The Ends of a spiritual Combination are Edification, and mutual Building up, and thereby advancing the Glory of God, *Eph. iv. 11, 12. Col. ii. 19.* Now this can never be rationally conceived attainable by joining or continuing in Fellowship with Rebels ; for the Blind will never lead the Blind aright ; they will rather leaven the Lump ; they will make the *Offering of the Lord contemptible*, and so make the People sin ; nay, have Influence to turn the World Atheists. Will such as have Principles of Enmity against God and his Ways, strengthen or build up his Brother, by his Counsel, Admonition, or Christian Deportment, whereby his Ways in Christ may be seen ? O the poor Ignorants ! What slays them ? The Minister speaks against Secularity, Drunkenness, Wordliness, Swearing, and that zealously ; and yet, in his Practice, he is given to all or most of these Evils himself. And what produces this ? Truly one of these two, either flat Atheism, to question the Truth of what is spoken, seeing the  
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loose Conversation of their Minister declares he believes it not; or else that they hope, tho' all this be Duty, and should be done, and all these Sins avoided, that yet, tho' they continue in Omission of the one, and Commission of the other, that, thro' the Mercy of God, and their contrary Profession, they yet shall be saved, and so hope, without Holiness, to get to Heaven. Surely the Practice of such doth preach this damnable Doctrine, as intelligibly and powerfully, as tho' they went and spoke it with their Mouths: And therefore, tho' such pretend and seek to build, yet should not be permitted, seeing their Principles lead them to destroy the Temple, *Ezra iv. 2.*

2. Because there will never be Peace or Concord there: Where there is an unequal Yoking, there is an unequal Drawing; and the Extremes are so incapable of Union, that they can never unite really, but contrarily divide evermore; which is directly opposite to the Union which they profess, especially when it comes to Acting in that Particular in which they agree not, but are opposite. Christ and the Devil may as well agree together. And have we not had the sad Experience of this already in our Times?

3. Because to join or continue in Fellowship with such is unsuitable, in regard the Extremes, being contrarily acted by contrary Principles, cannot unite; and it is unsuitable to their Relation, as it terminates on the Work which they jointly prosecute. It is a holy spiritual Work, a holy God, a holy spiritual Combination: And therefore all this is most unsuitable to unholy carnal Persons to be interested in it. *Holiness becometh thine House, O Lord, for ever.*

4. In respect they will never really unite; and therefore it is in vain to seek to unite them. It is a ridiculous Thing to seek to unite Water and Fire; so it is a ridiculous Thing to seek really to unite with wicked Persons. Indeed Saints have real Unity of the Spirit among themselves, because of one Spirit acting,

acting, ruling and living in all, which is called the *Bond of the Spirit*: And hence they *mind, speak and do the same Things, as they are one in him, who is One*, I Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6. Eph. v. 31, 32. Nor will it follow, tho' Saints be really united to Christ, that therefore they are *Christed*, (as some will have it inferred) no more than the Body is *souled*, (so to speak) or the Foot *handed*, tho' the Soul and Body, the Foot and Hand, be really united, because the Union is not of Essence, but of Participation. And, methinks, Saints should love one another extremely, who are so extremely and wonderfully united and cemented among themselves. And I question not, whatever Jarrs be for a Time in particular, and if Controversies never end, but Divisions continue, and that in Vigour, it is a shrewd Symptom that 'tis the *Seed of the Serpent* and the *Seed of the Woman* that are justling one another; and that it is *Amalek, with whom the Lord will have War for ever*. And therefore Extremes, incapable of real Union, cannot rationally be sought to be united. Hypocrites may be relatively united, by Covenant, with Saints, tho' they cannot be really physically united, because common appearing Grace, overgilding Corruption, may give occasion to Charity to think them in the Union of the Spirit: And hence their Gifts may be profitable to the Church, and so may be united with, and taken into Fellowship and Christian Communion. But, when Persons are openly and grossly scandalous, there can be no Union, but a Mock-Union. I speak not of a fundamental relative Union.

5. Because this Union crosses the revealed Design, Purpose and Ordination of God, which is, That the *Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent shall have perpetual Enmity* with one another; and the *Lord will have War with Amalek for ever*; and that we should *abhor such as fear not the Lord, and should not help them*. Prov. xxviii. 4. it is said, That *such as*  
keep



keep the Law contend with them. Now the uniting with them, and entering into spiritual Fellowship with them, were directly to cross and contradict all this.

6. In respect of the sad Consequences that will follow upon this Union, (of which afterwards) and that will follow, not accidentally, but necessarily, from it.

7. By uniting with such, and continuing in Fellowship with them, we involve ourselves in all the Prejudices, and Plagues that are to come upon them. God acknowledges but one in a Society. *Israel hath sinned*, when only *Achan* had sinned.

*Object. 1.* But may not such scandalous Persons have Gifts which may edify others, and therefore are to be heard? *Ans.* (1.) Then such as want these Gifts are not to be heard; and this will discharge most of the *Curates*. (2.) Tho' they have Gifts, yet, Is it expected that Persons possessed of Principles of Enmity to God, and his Ways, will employ their Gifts for building of the House of God, and his Interests? but will they not rather misemploy them for Satan? Every Thing must act according to its Nature.

*Object. 2.* But Preaching is the Power of God, and an Instrument of Conversion; and therefore, tho' the Instruments dispensing it be naughty, yet it may convert and work mightily as the Ark did among the *Philistines*. I answer, (1.) Preaching doth not convert by any innate Sufficiency in itself, but from the Blessing of God; *For the Kingdom of God doth not consist in Word, but in Power*, 1 Cor. iv. 20. and (2 Cor. x. 4.) *mighty through God to the pulling down strong Holds*. And do ye think the Lord will assist with his Blessing, where he is provoked to curse? Nay, where he promises to curse? *Shall they break the Covenant and prosper*, Ezek, xvii. 15. Jer. xxiii. 32. 'tis promised *they shall not profit this People, because I* (saith the Lord) *have not sent them*. And hence,

hence, for Confirmation of this, consider if ever any one Person hath been converted by them since they entred to their Charges. But (2.) Preaching is the Power of God, when dispensed by Men *sent by the Lord*, and in his Way, and no otherways. And therefore, when it is *not by Men sent by the Lord*, (which I take not the *Conformists* to be) it is no Ordinance of God. And besides, if this were a good Argument, then *Devils* might be heard. Why? They preach, and Preaching is the Power of God.

*Object.* 3. If the former Grounds hold, then ye shall not be able to join yourself to any Church at all; for there is no Church, especially national Churches, but hath some Members, yea, visible Members of Satan. *Ans.* 'Tis a Fault that it is so: But yet, in such Cases, the Denomination is taken from the most Part, or better Part. If the most Part be capable to exercise the Ends of their Combination, or the special Persons thereof, then there may be a Joining with them: For I join not with particular Persons so much as with the Society; my Joining with a Society, collectively considered, is not to be interpreted an Union with particular Persons; for then should there be as many distinct Relations, as there are particular Persons in the Combination: But my Union is with the Church, which, if for the most Part clean, is to be interpreted wholly clean: As he whose Feet are washed, is interpreted to be wholly clean.

*Object.* 4. The *Conformists* are in Covenant with us already, and we are incorporated according to the Laws of this Church; and therefore, being once married, must continue, tho' it may be with *Infidels*; and, if they continue with us, let us not depart, but do the Duties of our Relations, of which Hearing is one. *Ans.* (1.) *Adultery* may dissolve the Tye of *Marriage*, as Christ granteth, *Matth. xix. 9.* which the *Conformists* have done. (2.) *Impotency* dissolveth

*Marriage; Conformists*, being ignorant and scandalous, are not able to discharge their Office. (3.) I Cor. vii. 15. When an Unbeliever departeth, in this Case a Brother is not under Bondage. The *Curates* would not stay with us, yoked in the Relation they were in under the Government of *Presbytery*, but have gone after the *Prelate*, and therefore have broken the Bonds themselves; and Brethren, in this Case, are not under Bondage. (4.) In case the Prejudice redounding by that Combination be exceeding great, and noways to be dispensed with, then is the Marriage to be dissolved. And this, (as some think) was one of the Reasons that did move *Nehemiah* to separate the *Jews* from their strange Wives; their *Children spoke the Language of Ashdod*, and they were likely to corrupt Religion: But Prejudices ensuing upon our Fellowship with the *Prelates* and *Curates*, as I shall prove, God willing, therefore may we separate. (5.) The Rule saith, *Come out therefore, and touch not the unclean Thing*; and therefore, notwithstanding we joined, yet continue not Fellowship. (6.) We married with *Presbyters* acting in Subordination one to another, not with the *Curates* acting in Subordination to the *Prelate*; they are become another Thing: Therefore our continuing with them cannot be interpreted continuing in our former Relations. But,

*Object. 5.* *Separatists* have abused this Text, and ye build upon their Grounds. I shall answer this *Objection* by itself largely elsewhere. Only now I say, I do acknowledge that the *Separatists* did overstretch it, grounding a Separation from Good and Bad, and not only from Persons, but from the Form of Government, and would have all moulded in a new Model, which we do not.

*Object. 6.* God calls the *Jews*, who were living in Idolatry, Oppression, Witchcraft, his People still; he disowns no Relation in them: Therefore,

seeing such were scandalous, and obstinately scandalous too, and yet the Bond and Tye betwixt God and them was not broken, there may be a continued Relation betwixt us and graceless Persons, yea, and betwixt us and such as visibly do appear so. And hence, tho' *de jure* they deserve a *Bill of Divorce*, yet *de facto* are they the *Lord's Wife*; and therefore may our Relations with *Conformists* continue. *Ans.* All that this proves is, That the aptitudinal external, yet real and fundamental Relation may continue with graceless Persons, thro' which it is, that *all the Day long he stretches out his Hands to a rebellious People*: Which fundamental Relation is not physically real, but relatively only; and ye know I excepted that. But yet, notwithstanding, this fundamental relative Relation, taking Renunciation from what was the actual, real and physical Union and Communion, was interrupted and broken: For *Branches in him, that bear no Fruit, are cast out*: For this fundamental Relation is nothing but the continued Declaration and Offer of Salvation thro' Christ, and resulting Right therefrom to them to believe, with an Obligation from Men to do and believe: But this speaks nothing of actual Union with such as profess Idolatry, and cast the Lord behind their Backs, or Communion with them, such as Hearing is. Likewise, in our Lands, if our King should be invaded by Usurpers, and I suppose that one or two of the Nobles should, in Process of Time, join with the Usurpers, these might still be called Subjects, he not losing his Right in and over them by their Rebellion: But yet, in the mean Time, no loving Subject should, or would, by Law, be permitted to speak or converse with them, or actually serve them in their old Relations; so is it here. We speak only of an Union when it is to begin, and of actual Communion when it is begun, in case of Apostacy; as I said in my 12th *Affertion*, restricting it to, and qualifying it

it with an actual Union and Communion. The Relation may be continued, and yet the Acts suspended. But the Ground is, because, tho' the Extremes appear different and contrary, yet the begun Relation is capable to continue betwixt them, being founded on another's Foundation, *Rom. xi. 28. They are beloved for the Fathers Sakes. The Root is holy, ergo, so are the Branches.* And hence, tho' the *Jews*, in themselves, were incapable of Union, yet, in respect of the Root from whence they sprung, and with whom the Covenant was first and immediately made, they are capable. And hence, tho' the Church of the *Jews* be no actual Church, yet many think that their Relation to God doth continue to this Day. Hence, when the Lord shall visit them, and bring them out of their Graves, they are called *his People*, *Ezek. xxxvii. 12. I will open your Graves, and cause you to come up out of your Graves, and bring you into the Land of Israel.*

*Object. 7.* Hypocrites are really Children of *Be-lial*, and yet we may have Communion with such. Christ chose one of them to be an Apostle, and to eat and drink with him, who was a *Devil*: Therefore we may yoke with such, if they profess the contrary. *I answer.* The Command, *Be not unequally yoked with Unbelievers*, is to be understood to speak of yoking with professed and known Unbelievers; not of hid Unbelievers; so not of Hypocrites, who are not *known* Unbelievers, but *appearing* Saints; and therefore may be joined with. And I do grant, that if they do profess (tho' they be Hypocrites) the Gospel, and Subjection to Christ, they may be joined with; but then let it be a real Profession, a serious Profession, not mocking or in Jest; which it is, when it is openly and avowedly contradicted by a contrary Practice. To profess Service to Christ, and yet really do Service to the Devil,

Devil, and openly too, is not a serious Profession, but a mock Profession.

*Object. 8. Last.* But *Hearing* is not a *Yoking* with the *Curates*; the Devil may come in and hear, and yet is he not really united in the Worship to the Preacher. I answer, Your hearing the Curate is joining and having Fellowship with him, when Hearing is an Act of Worship, and hath been the Sign of Communion by Persons before this; and hath been declared by Church and State to be the relative Duty ye owe to your Pastor. And, when the Curate publickly preaches to all that hear as the Flock, ye cannot, owning this Worship, but must needs join with him who is the principal Dispenser of it, and he whom ye hear. Likeas, in *Presbyterian* Times, your Hearing was an Act of Communion; so these coming in their Stead, you hearing, as you did formerly, must be interpreted to join likewise; nor will your Intention serve the Turn; for ye hear in the same Sense that Hearing is publickly taken, which is the relative Duty owing by Flocks to their Pastor. This cannot be said of the Devil, who is a Creature incapable to come under this relative Act, or go about it: *By eating of the Flesh, ye partake of the Altar.*

## S E C T. II.

*Wherein a second Argument against hearing the Conformists, from John x. 1—14. is prosecuted.*

**B E F O R E** we can draw an Argument from this Text, I judge it necessary that we explain it a little. Know then, that, in this Place, two Things are set down and cleared. 1. There is a Discovery of the *false Shepherd*. 2. The Carriage of the Flock in reference to him, which is set down parabollically in the first Part of the Chapter, and more plainly in the subsequent Part.

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I. The first Discovery of the false Shepherd is, *He comes not in by the Door*; and this *Door* (Ver. 8, 9, 10.) is explained to be *Christ*; and so the Sense will be, *He comes not in by Christ, nor hath a Commission from him.* *Jer. xxiii. 21. Verily I have not sent them*; and it may be such may be sent by others. And therefore, such as enter not in by the Church, in the *second Place*, to whom he hath given the *Keys* to open the *Doors* to whom he shall call, *Matth. xvi. 19.* come not in by *Christ*. And therefore, in a constitute Church, such as start out of their own *Heads*, come not in by the *Door*, and so are *Idol-Shepherds*. The Church hath the *Keys*, and must not be slighted; and their *Voice* and *Act*, according to *Christ's Will*, is the *Voice* and *Act* of *Christ*: And so not coming in by them, when it may be done, is rejecting of *Christ*. And (3.) all such enter not by the *Door*, whom *Christ* in his *Word* does not pitch upon; yea, whom therein he really excludes: For *Christ's Word* and himself are one. 'Tis true, *Christ* doth not now call from *Heaven*; yet doth he call, from and in his *Word*, such as he will have his Church to call, and gives their *Characters*, and describes those whom he excludes, *1 Tim. iii. 1—8.* For whom *Christ's Word* excludes, *Christ* himself excludes. Hence, when profane scandalous *Ministers* are chosen, they come not in by *Christ*, and consequently are no *Shepherds*: For that which did give a *Foundation* to Churches to chuse any *Officers*, is only the *Command* of *God*; and as it is the *divine Commission* that empowereth them, so, when *Men* transgress, or go beyond, and stray from that, they act illegally, and not in the *Sphere* of their *Authority*; and so their *Deed* is not ratified in *Heaven*; no more than when a *Man* is known to be unjustly excommunicated, (suppose for praying in his *Family*) is he to  
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be held really excommunicated, by any Fearer of God, nor excommunicated in Heaven.

The *second Mark* Christ gives of the false Shepherd, is, his evil Intention in coming into the Ministry. 'Tis not to convert, strengthen or feed the Sheep, (tho' they swear the contrary) but to fleece, to kill and destroy them, and to gain a Livelihood. And so, in this, Christ opposeth himself to them. *I am not come for these Ends, saith he, but that the Sheep might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* And, tho' this Intention be secret, yet it oftentimes appears by their Actions, and not by their Profession, which is not now to be much looked to. For such as will swallow an Oath, will not scruple to swear, That it is out of Love to save poor Souls, they take this Office upon them. And therefore,

A *third Mark* is, in a *Time of Temptation* they will give over and shift for themselves, and leave the *Sheep* unto the *Wolf*, either by contracting with him, or shunning of Danger, and when this is not out of a Concern and Regard for the Flock. Such as now flee for a Time, and possibly out of Respect unto their Flocks, who would be endangered by hearing them, and not for Fear of the *Wolf*, tho' I shall not justify the Fact altogether, yet I shall so far excuse it, as that it does not render those godly Persons, that manage so, to be *Hirelings*. And therefore,

A *fourth Mark* is, the *Hireling* hath not a *Care* of his Flock, as Paul had, when he said, *The Care of all the Churches is upon me.* A *Hireling* cares not what becomes of his People, whether they be converted or not, whether they sink or swim. He will not *live and die with them*. True Shepherds cannot always be personally present with their Flocks, yet they are *in their Hearts to live and die with them*; and, tho' they be *absent in the Body*, yet they are *present in Spirit*, in Care, and in Love. Let us next see the *Hireling*



ling described with reference to the Porter's, the Church's and Sheep's Carriage towards him.

*First,* It is said the Porter doth not open to him, whom God hath intrusted with the Keys of his Gates; he will not let him in, if he know him; when he seeks Admittance, he will be refused, if the Church be not corrupted. And if, by the Porter, ye understand God the Father, then he never opens the Door, either by Command or Practice, to a *professed* Hireling. And hence, because they cannot get in by the Door, they climb in at the Window, by Preferment, Moyen and Money; and by the civil Magistrate, and by corrupt Guides; and not by the ordinary Passage which God hath appointed.

*Secondly,* It is said, That the Sheep are not his; they are not related to him, and he is not their Shepherd: Tho' he meddle with them, yet they are not his, either in Property or Care. *Verse 12. They belong not to him.*

*Thirdly,* *The Sheep will not know the Stranger.* This would hold out this much, that they are not acquaint with him; he is of another Element and Class. They see nothing of the Father in him; and their natural Instinct cannot discern the Voice of the true Shepherd in him. They will not own or acknowledge him; for he is a Terror to them. And therefore,

*Fourthly,* It is said, *They flee from him.* He hath not the Garb, Carriage, nor Language of the *true Shepherd*; he is an unknown Creature to them. And hence, when he appears, there appears some *terrible Species* of him to them, so as they shun him, as the Lamb, by Instinct, does the Wolf. And how they can *hear* him and *flee* from him, is a Thing beyond my Conception. To say, That, by not hearing of him, is meant, they obey him not, nor follow his evil Doctrine, is a Truth; but yet not all that is hereby meant. For let any Man look to the Parable,

ble, and he shall find more than a not obeying. Their Carriage is as the Carriage of a Sheep unto a Stranger; and as Men do to a Thief, whose Person they shun.

Hence I think these Truths are clear from the Words. (1.) That he that cometh not in by the Door, but at the Window, to steal, and will flee in the Time of Temptation, is a *Hireling*. (2.) That such are not *Shepherds of the Flock*. These are the very express Words of Scripture. (3.) That the Sheep do not belong to such. (4.) That such are *Robbers and Thieves*. (5.) That the Sheep will not, and ought not to know them any Manner of Way, and flee from them, and that as from their mortal Enemy: But they ought, and actually do run away from them.

Hence I form this Argument, those that are *Hirelings, Robbers, Thieves, and Strangers*, are not to be heard or owned by the Flock. But the *Conformists* are such. I have here two Propositions to prove, (1.) That no Hireling, Thief or Robber, so discovered, is to be heard. And, (2.) That the *Conformists* are such.

I prove the *first Proposition* thus. If a *Hireling* be not the Shepherd of the Flock, then the Sheep owe no Subjection to him. But *Hirelings* are not the Shepherds of the Flock, which is clear from the express Words of Scripture, *Whose own the Sheep are not, Ver. 12. The Idol-Shepherd, Zech. xi. 17.* which is no more the true Shepherd than an Idol: God is the true God. And therefore, since they are not the Shepherds of the Sheep, there can be no relative Duty due to them, because there is no Relation, which is the Foundation of such mutual relative Acts. Again, if Christ say, That the Sheep hear not such, then we are not to hear them. But the first is true, as is clear from Verse 8. *All that ever came before me were*  
*Thieves*

*Thieves and Robbers, and the Sheep heard them not.* And therefore we are no more to hear *Conformists*.

The *second Proposition* I am to prove, is, That the *Conformists* are *Thieves and Robbers*. Truly their Conversation doth grieve me; but now it saves me much Pains to prove them *Hirelings*: If so, we will be wise, and take Christ's Marks of *false Prophets, of Wolves and Hirelings*. Many Ways they are known. Have they not come in at the Window, and not at the Door? Did ever Zion's King employ them? Are they the qualified Persons, whom his Word doth call? Do not they come to steal, and gain a Livelihood, and to fleece the Flock? Let any but seriously observe them, and shall he not see their greatest Care to be versant about their Stipend? Have they not given over in the Time of Temptation? Have they not, not only fled from the Wolf, but taken Part with him? And, *lastly*, are they not *very indifferent* about their Flocks? Do they not express a great deal of *Neutrality* this Way? May not any one say, That the Souls of their Flocks is not their main Interest? Else would they be so wanton, light and merry, when so many are going to Hell? Would they be so little taken up in Visitation and Exhorting? Would they mind the World so closely? But let that one Scripture be marked by such as tell us, How know we the *Conformists* are *false Prophets*? *Matth. vii. 20. By their Works ye shall know them.* From which these Truths do clearly appear. (1.) That in the Church of God there will be *false Prophets* and *Hirelings*. (2.) That such may walk *very fairly*, and have the *outward Appearance of Sheep, they wear Sheep's Clothing*, so as many thereby may be deceived. This is all clear; and hence may preach orthodox Doctrine, and profess Christ, and to be his Friends; yea, and a great deal of Mortification too; *having a Form of Godliness. Satan's Ministers* may sometimes *transform themselves into Angels of Light*, *2 Cor. xi. 13.* (3.) That these

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*false*

*false Prophets*, for all their fair Pretensions, are yet but *real Wolves*, whose Nature and Actions tend, and will tend to the Destruction of the Sheep. They are inwardly *ravening Wolves*. (4.) That such, notwithstanding, may be known, otherways Christ would bestow but vain Labour to discover them unto his People. Yea, he has said, that *by their Works they shall be known*. As we say against the *Papists*, and others, who deny that a Christian can be certain of his own Sincerity by his Sanctification. We answer, Otherways why should the Holy Ghost be at so much Pains, in his Word, to discover Signs of Sanctification and Election, if they be not capable to attain their End, which is the Evidence of the Person's Election and Sincerity, who is so called: So I say here. Don't tell me then, How can ye know them? Who shall be the Judge, whether they be *Hivlings* or not? The Church hath found them qualified, and what shall we say to it? We are to submit to the Determination of others, who are in this Case competent Judges. But the Lord Jesus saith, *Ye shall know them*; and, for this Cause, hath given Marks of them; and therefore, what Occasion have we to rush ourselves into an unnecessary Ignorance? If the poor People have need to avoid *false Prophets*, lest they be prejudiced by them, Why may they not, and shall they not know them? *Ministers* must know such, lest they admit them, and *Laicks*, lest they bear them, and so get a Snare to their Souls. So then they may be known. If they could not be known, they could not be shunned. (5.) That the best Way to discover such, is, by their Works: And therefore, in this Chapter, it is by such Signs as this, that the Lord Jesus doth give a Discovery of *false Shepherds*. Don't tell me, they are ordained, and what have we more to look to? This is *Popish Divinity*, who make the Church their Rule, and live by a *blind Faith* and Obedience to them. But unto us Christ saith, *By their Works ye shall*

shall know them; and Christ's Marks are the best Marks. He does not say, Look to their Ordination, but consider their Works; and hence, in *Heb. xiii. 7, 8.* this is the Ground of Obedience to faithful Ministers, *Whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation; Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, and to Day, and for ever.* (6.) We may learn this, by the Works of corrupt Teachers we may very clearly and fully know them. For People might object, Who shall be Judge of that? That's a hard Task. The Lord Jesus replies, That we may know them as certainly as a Tree is known by its Fruits. *Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns? &c.* It is no Difficulty to know a Thorn-Tree by a Vine-Tree; ye may feel and see the Fruits of both. (7.) That the *Wolves*, thus discovered, should be *skinned*; and therefore it is said, *Beware of them: Carry to them as Sheep do to a Wolf.* And that the *Conformists* are such, they are *Strangers in our Israel that don't know*: Their abominable Works and wicked Courses are uncontroverted Evidences of their being *Wolves* and *false Shepherds*, tho' arrayed in *Sheep's Clothing*.

Some *Objections* being here started, must be answered. As,

*Object. 1.* The *Conformists* preach *sound Doctrine*, and that should be heard. *Ans.* I tell you Christ gets the forest Strokes with his own Weapons. This preaching *orthodoxly* is but the *Sheep's Clothing*. *Poper*y is not yet ripe enough to bring in: Yet are some Points of *Arminianism* preached, and the Doctrine of *Predestination*, under Pretence of its *Mysteriousness*, is *discharged*; and now and then, alas! some Batteries are raised against the Morality of the Sabbath. If Christ, at the first Bout, be threatened to remove with all his Truths, his Servants cannot suffer it, and therefore must be born with for a While; the Boil is not ripe enough to break as yet, tho' riper than it was four Years ago. The *Service-Book*, within these six  
Years,

Years, was thought a terrible and unsupportable Business, so was *Prelacy*: But Submission to the one hath made good Way to the other. Each Thing grows by Degrees, and *Rome* was not built in one Day. Little Wedges make Way for the greater to proceed surely, but slowly, saith the Jesuit *Campanel*, in his Advice to a Prince for the Introduction of *Poper*y. I look upon *orthodox* Preaching as the Covering to hide their *Villany* under. It must be disguised. Ye know, when the *Samaritans* would build, *We profess one God with you*, cried they, *Ezra* iv. 3.

*Object*. 2. Tho' *Conformists* be not Ministers *de jure*, yet they are Ministers *actu*; and therefore may be heard. This Argument is weak; for the Minor should be, the *Conformists* are not Ministers *de jure*. And the Conclusion should be, they should not be heard; no more than an Usurper is a lawful King, that should be obeyed, tho' he be actual King, that is, actually exercising the Office of a King. That only we can do, which by the Law we can do. Ye will urge, Usurpers come not in by the Law of the Land; but the *Conformists* are admitted by the Church, and People have Reason to hear them. I answer, The *Conformists* came not in legally, because they came in contrary to the Law. We have one Lord and Master, and are to call no Man on Earth Master; and, by his Laws, such Hirelings are discharged; and Church and State can do nothing in his House that will stand legally, except what is according to his Will and Mandate. An Usurper may get a corrupt Party in a Kingdom, who may formally intal him in his Office, and by whose Consent he may rule; But he is not therefore a King *de jure*.

*Object*. 3. Not hearing the Shepherd, but fleeing from him, is not to be understood of his Person, or of *aural* Hearing, but of following his *evil* Doctrine, which is practical Hearing. But I reply, (1.) If a Sin be forbidden, *viz.* an Error, then all the Means

Means leading to that Error are forbidden. *Shun all Appearance of Evil.* Therefore, as Errors and evil Courses are to be shunned, so also Countenancing of them; and consequently *Hearing*, being a Means to lead unto *Error*, and to *leaven the whole Lump*, is forbidden. The Reason is, *If the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch*; and, *A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump*. But, (2.) This is said without Ground. For where is it said that *aural* Hearing is allowed, when *practical* Hearing is forbidden? *Cease, my Son, to hear the Instruction that causeth to err from the Words of Knowledge*, Prov. xix. 27. (3.) Because that the Hearing that is here forbidden, is such Hearing as is contradistinguished from the Hearing of the *true* Shepherds, and by which the *true* Shepherds are known: And therefore, as the *true* Shepherds are heard *aurally*, so the *false* Shepherds, in opposition to them, are not to be heard *aurally*. (4.) This puts not a Difference betwixt the *true* and *false* Shepherd (if the Flock may, at any Time, hear the *false* Shepherd) by the Carriage of the Flock to them; which is Christ's Drift and Scope. For, if *true* Shepherds preach some *Errors* not fundamental, as they may, we should *not* hear them either: And, when *Hirelings*, *e contra*, preach *true* Doctrine, as sometimes they may and do, this Mark, then, from the Sheep's Behaviour towards them, would be useless, for the Sheep should then follow him; and so none should be *Hirelings* but *Hereticks*. But yet the Devil's End is still carried on. And here wicked Men, driving on a Course of Defection and Atheism, are found in their Principles, (*viz.* their *Sheep's Clothing*) they do thereby kill the Heart. *Hereticks* that kill the Head are mortified; and this is their *Sheep's Clothing*. All serve the Bishop, to vote with him, and to arm the Vulgar with Hatred against the Lord's People, who dare not say, *A Confederacy with them*. And the Result of this *orthodox* Preaching is, Ministers

sters that will not join with the *Prelate* are *cried down* as *precise*, that for a *Circumstance* of Government leave off to preach; and it is well that they are deposed. Is not then *another Christ preached*? And hence they get many to join with them upon this Account. And this is it with which they batter others, and with which they draw in *Neutrals*. Why? They are *Protestants*. (5.) Because it is a *Hearing* denoting such a Carriage as the Sheep have to a Thief, and stands not with *aural* Hearing, nor with such a Fellowship as is pleaded for.

## S E C T. III.

*Wherein a third Argument is handled, drawn from the Conformists Want of a Commission, as it is Jer. xxiii.*

21. John xiii. 20. Rom. x. 15. Heb. v. 4.

THE *Argument* runs thus. Such as are known to want a *Commission* from God, are not to be heard. But the *Conformists* are known to want a *Commission* from God; and therefore are not to be heard.

In prosecuting this *Argument*, I shall prove these *three Things*. 1. That a *Commission* from God is absolutely *necessary*, and that *without* it none may be heard *lawfully*. 2. That it may be *known* whether Pastors have a *Commission* from God. 3. That the *Conformists* are to be conceived as such who want a *Commission*.

I. For the first I give these *Grounds* following.

I. If they cannot preach without a *Commission*, then we cannot hear them: For they are *Relatives*; and the same Mouth that said, *How can they preach except they be sent?* said, *How can they hear without a Preacher?* as is clear from Rom. x. 15. For by *Preaching* is there meant *lawful* Preaching; for, in a physical Sense, they may and do preach; and the pastoral Office must proceed from God, Heb. v. 4. *No Man taketh this Honour unto himself, save he that is called of God, as was Aaron, who, tho' he was ministerially and*

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instrumentally consecrated by Moses, yet was principally called of God, *Exod. xxviii. 1.* For it being God's Message to God's People to whom he must speak, hence he must have some Commission from him, or by his Mouth; and hence (*Mal. ii. 7.*) he is called the *Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*: And therefore, unless he be called of God, he cannot be heard as his *Messenger*.

2. Because their *Commission from God* is all the Ground upon which Obedience is pressed upon the People: And therefore, if they want this *Commission*, there is no Foundation of Submission. For, if the formal Reason be wanting, whatever is bottomed upon that formal Reason must fall to the Ground. And hence no *Commission*, no *Submission*. I prove the *Assumption*, viz. That *God's Commission* is the formal Ground of *Hearing*, or *Submission*, from *John xiii. 20.* Christ encouraged People to hear, from this, *He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me.* And (*Luke x. 16.*) when Christ himself would be acknowledged, he tells them, *He that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* And the Ground is, Ministers are *Christ's Ambassadors*, *2 Cor. v. 20.* so that what they do Christ doth it, *Eph. ii. 17.* Christ is said to come and preach to the *Ephesians*, because *Paul*, his *Ambassador*, did it: And therefore it is for their Master's sake they are to be owned. And hence, having no *Commission* from God, which is the Ground of Acknowledgment, they are not to be acknowledged at all.

3. We are either to hear them as the *Messengers of Men*, or as the *Messengers of God*: Not as the *Messengers of God*, because it is supposed they have no *Commission* from him; nor are we to hear them as the *Messengers of Men*, because it is not their Message they declare. Let but any Man lay his Hand upon his Breast, and see how it beats, when he saith, I hear not such a Person as the Messenger of God, tho' he comes to speak in God's Name.

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Doth it not sound harshly, to say we hear them as the Messengers of Men? And therefore, in receiving them, we receive not Christ. And to hear Men merely as gifted, is, according to our Principles, unlawful: And besides, they preach as such who are invested with a Commission, and pretend *Authority* from God.

4. The Lord (*Jer. xxiii. 16, 21.*) forbids to hear them, because he *both not sent them*; and therefore *they shall not profit this People*. And therefore to hear, in such a Case, is Rebellion against God, and utterly unlawful.

5. To hear them in such a Case, is to countenance and join with them, and harden them in their Presumption and their bold Imposture. And therefore 'tis said, *The Flocks of the false Shepherds shall be scattered*, *Jer. x. 21.*

II. The *second Proposition* is, That we may know (even prescinding from Ordination) whether Ministers be *sent of God*, or not.

1. Because we could not in Faith obey them, unless we did, in some Measure, know from what Fountain they had their Authority. How shall we hear them as Ministers of God, unless we did know them to be so? The Word of God is the Ground of Faith. A Church's Testimony is a poor Ground of Faith.

2. Because the Lord doth promise, and endeavour, by Marks, to let his People know such are not sent, *Matth. vii. 20. By their Fruits ye shall know them.*

3. Because the Word doth shew who are not called of God; and therefore we, knowing this Way, know it likeways.

4. Because it will be proven that *Conformists* are not sent; which it would not be, unless it were possible to know so much: For nothing can be proven, but that which may be known.

III. The

III. The *third Proposition* is, That the *Conformists* have no *Commission* from Christ. Which I prove thus. (1.) God's Laws and God's Commission clash not one against another; nay, his Laws may be his Commission. But the Lord's Law does not ordain them to preach, yea, forbids them to be chosen: Therefore the Lord did never send them, or call them. I prove the *Minor* from *1 Tim.* iii. 1—8. and *Psalms* l. 16: and have largely proven it elsewhere. To forbid one to be chosen, and yet commissionate him to be chosen, were contradictory Laws. (2.) God never gave Commission to Enemies, carrying on a Course of Rebellion against him; for such would dishonour and grieve him. No wise Man would do so. But the *Conformists* are his Enemies now; and hence they are intrusted with *no* Commissions from him, *Psalms* l. 16. *Ezek.* xlv. 8, 13. (3.) Their Works declare them to be *false Prophets*, and therefore not *true Prophets*, and so not sent: For every *sent Prophet* is a *true Prophet*, & *e contra*, *Matth.* vii. 18. (4.) The *Conformists* do no Good in their Ministry; they have converted none since they were admitted; and few or none can say they get Good of them; and therefore this is a Token they are not sent, *Jer.* xxiii. 32. *I have not sent them: Therefore they shall not profit this People at all.* The Barrenness of the *Conformists* Ministry doth witness that they are not sent. (5.) God never commissionated any, but such as are *qualified* for their Office, *Exod.* xxxv. 30, 31. Those that are called to work in the Tabernacle, *God fills them with a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.* The *Conformists*, being ignorant and unacquainted with divine Mysteries, are unfit and unqualified for their Office. (6.) The perjured *Prelates* send them; therefore not *God*.

Some Objections are raised against this Argument,

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which require an Answer, which I will do very briefly.

*Object.* 1. God hath intrusted the *Power of Ordination* unto his Church, and the Church hath *ordained* them, which is the *Voice* of God on Earth; and what his Church doth on Earth, is done in Heaven: And hence, because *called by the Church*, may be said to be *commissioned* by God, even as the principal *Commissioner* is said to do what his *Depute* doth. I answer, God's Commission to his Church is not *unlimited* and *unbounded*, but *restricted* and *bounded* in such a Manner; and therefore they cannot chuse whom they *will*. God qualifies the Persons in their Commission whom they shall chuse: *They shall appoint him whom the Lord God shall chuse*, Deut. xvii. 15. And hence are discharged to *lay Hands* upon some, lest they be Partakers in their Sins. Hence the Church, going without their Sphere; and contrary to this their Commission, cannot be said to act by God's Authority; and so, whom they send, God doth not send. And therefore, as to the *Confirmation*, I answer, Whatever the Church *binds* and *looses* according to the Will of God, that is *bound* in Heaven. This I grant; but not what is contrary to the Will of God: For whatever is done contrary to the King's Will, is not done by his Will. Suppose Christ would come down from Heaven, and say to us, "O my dear People, I see you in Confusion with Reference to these wicked Men, not knowing how to carry to them: But, for your Direction, know it, and I, who am the *faithful and true Witness*, do declare it, That I never sent them; nay, they run contrary unto my Command, and they are admitted contrary unto my Will, with which I am greatly provoked." If, I say, Christ would say this much from Heaven, would any Man doubt of his having Clearness enough against Hearing? Truly the Lord hath

hath evidently said as much by his *clear Word of Prophecy*, That he hath not sent them. And their Lives, Course and Conversation proclaim, with a loud Voice, That God *never sent* them.

*Object. 2.* But does not this tend to turn the World to Confusion, and to make every Man's *Fancy* his *Judge*, and to overturn all Order? By this Means every Man that shall fancy, in his Conscience, that the Church doth err in Ordaining, or in any of her Acts, shall never submit. Who made particular Persons Judges in this Case? The Church saith he is qualified, Who shall be Judge in this Case? And who are to be believed?

This *Objection* is of great Consequence, and much doth depend on it; and is urged and harped upon by many who are not able to cut this Cord, and who resolve to live in a blind implicit Obedience to prevent Disorder. And, if I mistake not, the very Root of *Popery*, and the casting aside of the Scriptures, lies here. To all this I shall very clearly answer, in these *Considerations*.

1. It is acknowledged; That all Things necessary to be believed and done, are contained in the Scriptures, and is a perfect Rule of the whole Man. This is acknowledged, I say, by all *Protestants*.

2. That whatever concerns the Duty of Man, as it is perfectly revealed in the Scriptures, so it is clearly and plainly revealed in some Place or other: For *God giveth not an uncertain Sound*. For otherways it should fail in its main End; and the Revelation of his Will were no Revelation.

3. That God hath given a Judgment and Understanding to every Man, which, according as it is enlightned by the Lord's Spirit, may proportionally understand actually what is contained in these Scriptures. And those that pretend Ignorance, let them

them know, *That, if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, 2 Cor. iv. 3.*

4. That God's Will, thus clearly revealed in his Word, is the Rule to the Lord's People of all their Actions, according to which, and by which they should walk and be regulated.

5. That the People of God may therefore see and know, from the Lord's Will in his Word, what is their Duty.

6. That, in respect of Means, Weakness to see so perfectly, and for the Help of God's People, and to execute these good Laws, that so they may be made effectual, he hath appointed certain *qualified Persons*, who may clear his Will, by *comparing Scripture with Scripture*, and with Authority to execute the Censures thereof.

7. That these Persons, thus intrusted, are but *Helpers*, and have not *lordly Dominion* over the Faith of God's People, so as to impose a Belief of what they list, or the Practice of any Thing they fancy; but are bounded and regulated by the Will of God, as revealed in his Word: And that, if they transgress this, they are not to be obeyed.

8. Whatever, therefore, God reveals in his Word, as *Duty*, or *Sin*, that must be accordingly *done* or *shunned* by the Lord's People, whether the Church be for it, or no; who are only *Helpers of our Joy*, and not *Lords over our Faith*.

9. It will not follow therefore, that, because a Man pretends to understand the Lord's Will, that therefore he is Judge in the Case, (for the Scriptures have already judged and determined such a Thing to be believed or done) no more than when the *Messenger at Arms* goes to execute his Letters, that he makes himself Judge of what is contained in them, seeing that is done to his Hand. And therefore the dull-headed *Prelate*, in his pretended Refutation of

*Naphtali*, \* doth but weakly infer, " That this is to  
 " open a Door to all Confusion; and that, by this  
 " Doctrine, a Man is impowered to do whatever  
 " he fancies; and refuse Submission to Authority,  
 " if he shall think their Orders wrong." This is ve-  
 ry weakly said: For the Author of *Naphtali* saith,  
 " That a Man's own private Judgment is no suffici-  
 " ent Ground to refuse Subjection or Obedience unto  
 " Authority, but in as far as it is regulated and war-  
 " ranted by the Word of God: And therefore he  
 " doth not these Acts, because he fancies them to be  
 " right, but because they are warranted by God's  
 " Word: And therefore, when he hath no Warrant  
 " from the Word, his own Fancy can be no Ground."  
 And hence here is no Door opened for Confusion.  
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\* *Naphtali*, or, The Wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the Kingdom of Christ, was compiled by two very great Men; the reasoning Part of it was done by Sir James Stuart of Goodtrees, one of the best Lawyers of his Time; and the historical Part by a very worthy Minister, the Reverend Mr. James Stirling Minister of the Gospel at Paisly. It was condemned by a Proclamation of the Privy-Council, dated December 12. 1667. and all the Lieges commanded to bring in the Copies thereof to the Magistrates, against February thereafter, under the Penalty of Ten thousand Pounds Scots. An Answer was published to it by Mr. Andrew Honyman Bishop of Orkney; but therein he evidently weakned the Cause he undertook to defend, and was taken up, with great Strength of Reason, by the fore-said Sir James Stuart, in that excellent Treatise intituled *Jus populi vindicatum*. This Apostate Honyman was afterwards wounded in the Hand by the Shot of a Pistol, by Mr. James Mitchel, July 11. 1668. as a just Judgment of God upon him, for employing his  
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For we give no more Liberty than the Word gives: And it is strange that Liberty should be denied to follow the Word. Nor,

10. Do we hereby annul the Use of the Church-Judicatories, whose Office we acknowledge it to be to shew and clear the Law, by opening the Sense thereof, and by comparing Place with Place. I say, to clear the Law more fully, thus, but not to give a Sense of their own, nor to cause the People believe it, merely because they explain it so; but to help to the Believing of the Word, by shewing and demonstrating, from other Scriptures, that this is the Meaning of it; and hence make them know it, and see it, and believe it; not because they say it, but because, by their Pains and Endeavours, they themselves come to see it, and then to execute Sentences and Censures upon the Disobedient: Which Power is given to no particular Person. And hence,

11. If particular Persons shall not submit to the Sentence of the Judicatory, when it is right, the Judicatory is not to make the private Person's Error or Fancy the Rule, but are to proceed in executing the Laws, according to the Lord's Will; which they must attend unto. And,

12. It is foolish, therefore, to enquire who shall be Judge in such a Case, especially to any *Protestant*, who holds and maintains the Perfection of the Scriptures, and that *the Spirit of God speaking in them is the Judge of Controversies*: For, by the same Reason, active Obedience may be pressed to all unlawful Commands, as well as passive Obedience; seeing the  
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*Hand to write in Defence of the abjured Prelacy, against which he had some Time before made a very zealous Appearance. The Character Mr. Fraser gives of him will appear extremely just to such as have read his dull Performance.*



same Question will recur concerning the one, as concerning the other, and God's Laws do bind one immediately. If therefore the Place of Scripture, that I take for my Warrant, be obscure, let us look to another, and if that be clear, what needs it to be judged? That which the Lord hath determined, and clearly judged already to be done, needs not be judged over again. And therefore, when God declares in his Word, that no *Drunkard, Swearer, or perjured Person*, shall be chosen in his Church to be a Minister, and when my Eyes see him to be such a Person, I am sufficiently warranted to think God never sent such an one; and that the Church hath erred in ordaining him, and so thereby hath gone beyond her Commission. And yet,

13. *Lastly*, I will grant Submission to an unjust Sentence, in some Cases, when the Ills necessarily resulting from Non-Submission, are greater than any Good could be expected by my Disobedience to the Sentence. And this my Submission would not be because of any Authority in the Sentence, (seeing the Church or State hath no Authority to pronounce or execute evil Sentences) and so consequently, I judging this to be such, should not submit to it; as tho' I conceived it to serve Authority, but only *ad evitandum majus malum*, or to eschew a greater Evil. In which Case I would submit passively to an *Usurper*.

And now, what is in all this Doctrine that leads to Confusion? The Sum of which is, that, in all our Acts, we should be squared by the Scriptures; which is acknowledged intelligible to those whose *Minds the God of this World hath not blinded*; and that Church and State acting contrary to the Word of God, act without the Sphere of their Authority; and that no Obedience, either active or passive, is due but unto God and agreeably to his Will.

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Now, till this be digested, never shall the Subject *but walk* in blind Obedience. Nor is this *Enthusiasm*, either, to father all on the Spirit; for the *Enthusiasts* make the Spirit's Teaching within, to be the objective formal Ground of Believing, and not his written Word, which we take for the objective Ground of Faith. And therefore, to the Case in Hand, seeing the Lord, in his Word, tells us truly whom he sends, it is no Presumption in me to think such are not sent, when I see them; nor to acknowledge them so sent, tho' an œcumenical Council should likewise ordain them.

*Object.* 3. But it doth not concern private Persons to judge of qualified Persons. *Ans.* I grant *primarily* and *mainly* it doth not. But it is unwarrantably said, It concerneth not God's People to know who are qualified Persons; seeing they of all others are most interested in them to know it best. They sin by receiving such, as others have done by admitting them; and lest they get one, whom, because the Lord hath not sent, shall therefore not *profit* them.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Wherein a fourth Argument is handled, shewing, That we cannot hear the Conformists in Faith, Jer. xxiii. 32. Matth. xv. 9.*

The Argument runs thus, those whom we cannot go to hear, in Faith of a Blessing upon the Ordinances dispensed by them, we cannot hear: But we cannot hear the *Conformists* in Faith.

I prove the *first Proposition* thus. *The Lord hath not said to the House of Jacob, Seek my Face in vain; but promiseth, that in doing this they shall live.* And if so, then he hath not commanded us to go to any Ordinance, where no Profit is to be expected; for these are contradictory. For, if he command only

ly to go where we may get Advantage, then he never commands us to go where no Profit can be expected. (2.) No Mean is chosen, which is not able to attain its End, *Isa. lv. 2. Wherefore do ye spend your Labour for that which satisfieth not?* Therefore we are not to go to a Place where we have no Ground to believe a Blessing will accrue to us. (3.) If the unprofitable Using of Means be a great Curse, then we are not to frequent Means to which no Blessing is promised. But the first is true, *Matth. xv. 9. In vain do ye Worship me.* This was the Curse; but to worship God in Ordinances, to which no Blessing is promised, is to worship God in vain. God hath appointed the Ordinances for converting and building up; and, when this cannot be expected, it is in vain to go. To go to divine Ordinances for *Fear* of the *civil Magistrate*, is no *lawful* End.

I prove the *second Proposition*, viz. That we cannot expect a Blessing on the *Curates* Preaching, thus. That which is nowhere in the Word commanded, to that we cannot expect a Blessing, *Matth. xv. 9.* The Reason why they *worship the Lord in vain*, is, because they teach not the *Doctrine of God*. Now, we are nowhere commanded in Scripture to hear *Hirelings*. If there be such a Command, let us see it, and we will be instructed. And, if there be not, How can we go in Faith, or in Hope of a Blessing? For the Ground of Faith is the revealed Will of God; where there is therefore no Ground for this in the revealed Will of God, there is no Ground of Faith. (2.) Because there is no Promise of a Blessing, in Scripture, to our hearing of such as the *Conformists*: Therefore we cannot in Faith hear; for the Promises are the Ground of Faith. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the Increase.* The *Curates*, some of them, may have Gifts and Parts, but they want *Power, in which the Kingdom of God consists*. Where is there a Promise in Scripture for this? (3.)

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'Tis in vain to come in Hopes of a Blessing to such whom God doth assure us shall not profit us. But the Lord doth assure us, that such as *Conformists* shall not profit, because *not sent*; as, in my proceeding Argument, I have proved the *Curates not to be sent*, *Jer. xxiii. 32.* (4.) God will never bless that which is an Abomination to himself, and which is discovered to be so to those who frequent it. But our *Curates* Preaching is a known Abomination to the Lord, as I shall prove in my next Argument. The *Major* is clear from the Light of Nature, and from Scripture, *Mal. i. 8.* *If ye offer the Blind for Sacrifice; is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick; is it not evil? Will the Lord accept it? And therefore ye are accursed with the Curse.* Will the Lord's Fire come down upon the Sacrifice which his Soul abhorreth? And (5.) because the Lord's Word doth assure us, that such as *break the Covenant shall not prosper*, *Ezek. xvii. 15.* *Eccles. v. 4, 6.* *Pay that which thou hast vowed—Wherefore should God be angry at thy Voice, and destroy the Work of thine Hands?* But have not the *Curates* broken the Covenant, and said unto the *Angel*, *It was an Error*, and after *Vows* have made *Enquiry*? And shall we then expect they should prosper, or hope God should prosper the Work of their Hands. I know this wanton and truckling Generation may easily cavil at Scripture, and wrest it to promote their wicked Designs and Practices. But to attend an Ordinance doomed to a Curse, is to expect Water from a Stone. If God will curse a Medicine, no Physician were wise to prescribe it to his Patient. 'Tis vain, wanton and childish, I had almost said, profane, to argue from Metaphors and Allusions; as to say, The Ravens are unclean Birds, and yet did feed *Elijah*: And therefore so may the *unclean Curates* feed me. Go, mourn and be humbled for the Levity of your Spirits, that thus play and sport with the Lord's

Word.

Word. Ravens are pronounced unclean Birds: And if this wanton Divinity, proceeding from an *enthusiastical* and *adulterous* Spirit, were good, then would it prove, that Ministers *excommunicated*, and by that declared *unclean*, (for so were the Ravens) should be heard. I might better argue, *If any that is unclean touch hallowed Flesh, shall he not be unclean?* Hag. ii. 13. And so, tho' the Word be hallowed Flesh, as it were, yet the unclean Priest, touching it; makes it unclean. That which is filthy in the Lord's Eyes, can never be pure to a Saint, when they see it so.

S E C T. V.

Wherein a fifth Argument is handled, from Isaiah i. 11—15. & lxvi. 3, 4. Ezek. xx. 39. because of the Sinfulness of the Curates Preaching.

THE Argument runs thus. That which is intrinsically and necessarily sinful in the Lord's Sight, that is not to be done or countenanced by hearing. But so is the Curates Preaching. *Ergo*, &c.

In order to the proving of this, I shall clear these three Things. 1. That we are not to countenance such Acts as are *sinful* in the Lord's Sight. 2. That the Curates Preaching is *sinful* in the Lord's Sight. 3. That Hearing is a Countenancing.

And, for the better Understanding of all this, I will resume what I have spoken before to three Things. (1.) That an Action in itself good, may be so polluted by Reason of Circumstances, that it may be very sinful in the Sight of God; yea, so sinful, that it may be a Duty to omit it; and that the Commission of such a Duty may be a greater Sin than the Omission thereof. See Chap. 2. Sect. 4. (2.) That it is not accidental Pollutions, to speak of such as these Defects that do attend the Prayers of unregenerate Men; which, tho' abominable to God, yet not in respect of the Duty, but in respect of the sinful Concomitants,

comitants, not necessarily, but accidentally attending them, who may be joined with, and whose Sins in Praying are not yet so sinful as in omitting them: Nor are these Duties so sinful, as that thereby they are disengaged to pray. But (3.) I mean not of such a Sinfulness attending the Action generically good, but as contracted or individual to such a Time and Person, and intrinsick Manner of Performance, most sinful, so as to be omitted, rather than done.

I. The *first Proposition*, in the Sense given, *viz.* *That it is not lawful to countenance sinful Actions*, is so universally received and acknowledged, that the Proof might seem needless, *Prov. i. 15. Obad. 12. Psalm l. 18.* But consider these Reasons. (1.) Because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ doth discountenance Sin; and we should be holy as he is holy, *1 Pet. i. 15. Lev. xi. 44. & xix. 2. & xx. 7.* It was a strong Argument that the Prophet *Hanani* used against *Jehoshaphat* the King of *Judah* for going up with wicked King *Abab* to *Ramoth-gilead*, *Shouldst thou help the Ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?* *2 Chron. xix. 2.* So I say, Should ye love those Duties which the Lord hates? And the Saints, being changed into the same Image, should and do love what he loveth, and hate what he hateth. (2.) Because our countenancing them in their Sin, or of their Sin, is a Strengthening of them in it; and that is unlawful. Now, Fellowship with them strengthens and hardens them, in respect Separation weakens them, makes them ashamed, or takes Heart from them, *2 Theff. iii. 14.* Fellowship therefore with them doth take away the Mean of their Conversion. (3.) Because the Law of God doth interpret the countenancing of Sin, a Sinning, *1 Sam. ii. 29.* *Eli* is charged with the Fact himself, when he doth not restrain it in his Sons, *Rev. xiv. 4.* *Come out of her, my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.*

II. My next Task isto prove the *Curates Preaching sinful*, and that *intrinsically and necessarily*. (1.) Because their *Preaching is contrary* to the Law of God, not only as to the *Manner or Way* of doing it, but likeways in the *Act itself*, so as, *rebus sic stantibus*, or, Things so standing, the very Act is prohibited. For, tho' they should preach never so zealously, sincerely, affectionately, and soundly, yet, in respect they are, for the present, in a publick Scandal, and have their Office and Authority from the *Prelate*, their Preaching would be necessarily sinful, *Psalml. 18, 21*. I have elsewhere proven, that the *Conformists* should not preach, but should leave off, as the rest have done: And therefore (2.) their Preaching must be sinful: For one Thing cannot be affirmed of two Contraries. See *Chap. 2. Sect. 4*. (3.) In respect the *Omission* of it is less sinful than their *Preaching*; and therefore their Preaching must be exceedingly sinful, *Ezek. xx. 39*. Because the *Conformists* continue in Sin, *Isa. i. 12. Psalm lxvi. 18*. their *Hands are full of Blood in their Uncleanness*. (5.) Because the Lord calls the *merely hypocritical* Performance of his visible Church, during the Continuance in Sin, *sinful and Iniquity* itself, and accounts it rather *offering of Swine's Flesh*, and discharges it as *Murder*, *Isa. lxvi. 3, 4*. And, if the Lord be *wearied with*, and call these Services *Iniquity*, Who shall or can call them *Duty*? And therefore, as, by our Presence, we should not countenance the *killing of a Man*, or *cutting off a Dog's Neck*; so neither Ordinances so polluted, which they are so in the Lord's Sight. And the same Reason that made the *Jewish Sacrifice abominable* in the Lord's Sight, the same makes *Conformists Preaching odious*, viz. *Perjury, Drunkenness, Hands full of Blood*; of which the *Curates* are guilty as well the *Prelates*. Alas! alas! shall we, by our Presence, countenance such Acts as

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are, by the Lord's own Relation, a *Burden* to him? Shall we see the Lord, as it were, *tormented*?

III. The *third* Thing I am to prove, is, *That Hearing of the Conformists is a Countenancing of them.* Now, in regard that every personal Presence, at an unlawful Action, is not a Countenancing of it, 1 *Kings* xviii. I will prove that *Hearing of the Conformists* is a countenancing of them, by these Grounds.

(1.) Our last End in hearing of them is Edification by them: For, as your Heart esteems any Thing, that hath an edifying Virtue, hence coming to it ye likewise countenance it. When we make the Lord our last End, then we honour him; so, when we come to these Ordinances for spiritual Strength, then we honour them. Every Using of the Means is a Countenancing of them: And therein ye are active. And tho' that *Elijah* and *Mary* were personally present at unlawful Actions, 2 *Kings* xviii. *Matth.* xxvii. 56. yet it was not these Actions, morally considered, they were attending, but quite another Thing, namely, attending a Duty, which, by a Concatenation of Providences, was inseparable from that Action.

(2.) Because ye go on the Sabbath-Day: For by this ye declare that the Work ye go about is holy in your Judgment, otherways ye durst not take it up as the Object of your Exercise on that Day, no more than plowing the Ground.

(3.) Because ye go in Obedience to a Command enjoining the frequenting of such Ordinances as a Duty, and Testimony of your Approbation. For, in that Sense, the Law commands the Obeyers, *Obey, whatever their Intentions be.* Take this Similitude for clearing it. There are some commanded to be in Arms at the Execution of a Saint, to keep him from the People's Rescue. Now, altho' the Intention of many who come, be to free themselves from the Penalty, and to preserve their Places, yet they sin, and are, *in foro Dei*, Murderers. Nay, tho' they should



should say, their Intention was to be edified by his Discourse; yet many are personally present as well as they, and yet not guilty. How comes this? Here it is; the one goes in Obedience to an unjust Command; the other goes not really, nor in Appearance. Nor is passive Submission to an unjust Sentence a Countenancing of it, because this hath in it a Protest against the Law. But what needs more? Ye esteem Preaching an Ordinance of God, and therefore ye hear: And, when ye go and join as in an Act of Worship, ye countenance it: And it being, in the Judgment of Hearers, an Ordinance, it is countenanced when ye hear. Now, is there any other lawful Account upon which ye go on the Sabbath-Day? For, if Preaching be no Ordinance of God, then it is a Breaking of the Sabbath-Day, and a Profaning of the Sabbath-Day, to hear it.

*Object.* 1. Such Acts as are *substantially* sinful, we are not to join with: But we may join in Acts otherways good, which are *only* sinful *circumstantially*. The *Curates* Preaching is sinful, only in respect of the Person that preaches, tho' the Duty be *substantially* good; for he doth not sin in all he does. *I answer,* The *Curates* Preaching is not only sinful *circumstantially*, and as to the *Manner*, but likewise the *Matter*, in itself proceeding from an unlawful Authority. And the Act itself, in its individual Concept of Time and Persons, is prohibited; which *Circumstances* are inseparable. *I answer,* (2.) The *Curates* Preaching is a Sin *substantially* and not *circumstantially*; for, when the second Commandment is openly violated, this is as *substantially* a Sin as the Violation of the first, Tho' the Sins against the *second* Commandment be *Circumstantials* in their *physical* Essence, yet, in their *moral* Essence, they are *substantial*. If the *Jews* should offer Sacrifice at any Altar, except what was at *Jerusalem*, this was a Sin in *Substantials*, tho', as to its *physical* Essence, it was only a *Circumstance* of

of Place, and here was only a Violation of the Law, as to a *Circumstance*, Josh. xxii. 16. Breach of Sabbath, by Plowing, is only a *Circumstance* of Time; and *Uzziab's* Offering of Incense was lawful, except in the *Circumstance* of the Person that offered it; yet it was not lawful to join with *Uzziab* in that Act.

*Object. 2.* We do not, in hearing, countenance the *Curates Sin*, but the *Ordinance* of God. *Ans.* This is weak: For what is unlawful for them to do, and sinful, is *no* Ordinance of God: Otherways, if ye look on *Preaching* in its *general* Nature, ye might give your Sacrifice to King *Uzziab*, when he presumed on the Priest's Office, and say, We but countenance the Sacrificing itself, which was a lawful Duty, and we did as before: And so give your Sacrifices to him. But these *Cavils* are not worth the answering.

*Object. last.* If because the *Conformists* Preaching is abominable in the Lord's Sight, we are not to countenance them; then we are not to join with any unregenerate Man in any Action, civil or religious; for his *Plowing*, *Prayers*, and all his *Actions* are an *Abomination* to the Lord. *Ans.* I have met with this Objection already in *Chap. 2. Sect. 4.* And I told, in the Beginning of the Argument, that I only meant of such Pollutions as were antecedent to the Duty, and necessary Concomitants thereof, and did terminate intrinsically and visibly on the Action itself; and that were of such a Nature as did render the Omission of the Action not sinful, but Duty. The Act of Preaching, as now circumstantiated, is not a Duty, else those that have left off have *sinned*, and the *Conformists* are in their Duty. Now, the Actions of unregenerate Persons, tho' they be sinful accidentally, in respect of their continued Wickedness; yet never cease to be Duty, and are in themselves good, 1 *Kings* xxi. 29. & 2 *Kings* xiii. 4. For graceless Persons sin not in that they pray, but that they pray not in such a Way. But *Conformists* sin, not only as to the  
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Manner and Frame of their Heart in Preaching, but likewise as to the *Matter* thereof substantially considered: And hence, joining in the Act, we countenance Sin, the Act being *hic & nunc* sinful. But we join not with the *Manner* in graceless Persons Duties; and therefore sin not, as in the other.

S E C T. VI.

Wherein a Sixth Argument is handled, drawn from the sad Consequences of Hearing the Conformists.

THE Argument runs thus. That which hath sad and evil Consequences necessarily flowing from it, is not to be done. But our Hearing the *Conformists* hath such Consequences; *ergo*, &c. The first Proposition is clear. I will prove the *Minor* by instancing some few of the sad Consequences that ensue upon bearing the *Conformists*.

1. Do ye not hereby set a Snare for your own Souls? *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. *He that walketh with the Wise, shall be wise; & e contra.* Communion therefore, in as far as it doth infect, is sinful. It is said, That old Women, by lying in Bed with young Children, draw their Moisture from them, and weaken them very much. These old Stocks of *Adam*, by Fellowship with Christians, do them *Evil*, and secretly eat out their spiritual Life. I doubt not but the Experience of Saints will prove *Curates* Conversation alike. Some old Witches Looking upon Infants, hath a secret, tho' real *Fascination*. And hence many go to hear the *Curates* in a good Frame, and return with a very sad and melancholly one.

2. We do hereby make ourselves *Members of Satan*, and mingle in with the *Seed of the Serpent*, and so become related to them. *He that is joined with an Harlot, becomes one with her*, 1 Cor. vi. 16. He that is joined with *Conformists*, by hearing them (which is the relative Act and Badge of Union) becomes one with them. Now, as Union with such is unlawful, so is

Communion, which is but continued Union, 2 Cor. vi. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers.* For where there is no Relation, there can be no relative Act proceeding from that Relation. By your relative Act, ye shew and manifest that there is a Relation. As, therefore, ye would shun Union with them, shun Communion.

3. We expose ourselves to those Judgments which are hanging over their Heads. He that marrieth a Woman is liable to all her Debt while she liveth, because they are conjunct Persons: So, by these Acts of Communion, which presupposeth and ratifieth Union, we make ourselves in Law liable to the same Judgments that they are themselves. And, therefore, as ye would shun the sad Judgments that are to come on *Curates*, separate from them. Hence is that Word, *Come out of her, my People, — that ye receive not of her Plagues,* Rev. xviii. 4. *Numb. xvi. 26. Depart from the Tents of these wicked Men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their Sins.* When the Lord smites the Shepherd, the Flocks are scattered. See *Jer. xiv. 15, 16. Achan* alone sinned, and yet there fell a publick Stroke; for *Israel hath sinned. Tremble at this all ye Fearers of God.* Wo unto them who continue in Communion with the *curfed Prelates and Curates*; in the Day when God maketh Inquisition for their Bloodshed, and all their other Guilt: And verily the Lord knows, and I speak the Truth in Christ that comes into my most serious Thoughts a-  
 gent the Lord's People, my Heart hath been much affected and sorrowful by the Consideration of the awful Judgments of God, which I have been fearing would come upon some Professors for their Union with the *Curates*, the *Spawn* of antiscrptural *Prelates*. *Get up, therefore, ye Loiterers in Sodom; flee to the Mountains for your very Life, lest ye be consumed in the City and Society of these accursed Achans, that trouble our Israel.*

4. By our Union with them we are kept from doing these Duties which are commanded us; Abuses cannot be rectified; pure lively Ordinances cannot be dispensed; the faithful Messengers of God, whose Bellies, like *Elibu's*, are charged and swollen with new Wine, and ready to burst, cannot get spoken; the Children are starved; no Sacraments are administered; and all on account of these *unclean Hogs*. If it were not Conscience-making of keeping Fellowship with them, and to avoid Separation, Ministers might be doing something; but now they rest on this Form. I remember our first Reformers, debating that Case, *Whether best no Minister at all, or these wicked Ministers?* answered, Better no Ministers at all: And, among many Reasons, they gave this, Because the Room is filled up to which a faithful Ministry, during their being there, cannot enter. 'Tis so with us: We have *Hirelings* instead of *Ministers*; we have the *Image* of the true Worship instead of the *Substance*. And, until this *Image* be removed, we will never seek better; whereas, if we had none at all, then others might succeed, to do something agreeable to the Lord's Command and Will.

5. They hinder us from God's gracious Presence. If Communion with these were broken, God would quickly embrace us as his dear Children, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. *Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing; and I will receive you: And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* When Judas was away, Christ did then familiarly reveal his Love to the rest of his Disciples, *John* xiii. 31. *Come with me from Lebanon, (my Spouse) with me from Lebanon: Look from the Top of Amana, from the Top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions Dens, from the Mountains of the Leopards,* Song iv. 8. And then it follows,

lows, in the 9th Verse, *Thou hast ravished my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravished my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with one Chain of thy Neck.* Friends keep strange among others; but, when they are alone, they unbosom themselves to one another. There is now a very sad, yet ordinary Complaint among the Lord's People, That there is no more Fellowship with God; his gracious Presence is withheld; that God hides his Face, and suspends the wonted Influences of his Spirit; and the Sermons are ineffectual, and without Power. Oh! here's the plain Reason: Ye are joined with the *Priests of Baal, the Curates*: These are the Walls of Separation: And yet, alas! ye are in Love with your Bonds. And therefore, as ye desire the Lord's Presence, separate from these *unclean Vermin*; and then will the Lord return, and walk up and down amongst you. As many as have withdrawn from the Curates, can, in some Measure, witness the Truth of this. God is already separating by his Providences. We ourselves are separate in our Cause, in our personal Fellowship, in our Affections, in our Carriage, and in our Condition; and only in Practice and official Conversation draw near.

6. We are hereby tempted to despise the Lord's Ordinances, when such filthy Hands dispense them, *Mal. ii. 8. Ye are departed out of the Way: Ye have caused many to stumble at the Law.* And hence, when *Eli's Sons* were Priests, *the People abhorred the Offering of the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 17.* And truly, I think, when these Stage Play Puppets get up to the Pulpit, and cry up Holiness, and cry down Sin, there is no greater Temptation to Atheism under Heaven, and to esteem meanly of the Ordinances of Christ. And how indifferent zealous Hearers are become, their own Experience can witness.

7. This strengthens, confirms and establishes *Prelatical Power*, even as the Subject's Submission doth establish

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establish the Power of the *Usurper*. And there is no more required for your *Partis*, who are private Christians, than peaceable Hearing of them. This is all that, according to your Capacities, ye can do. And 'tis evident, that nothing hath given a greater Blot to *Prelates*, than this withdrawing of some, insomuch that they never think themselves secure till all hear: And, while there is a Party who refuse this, the Interests of the Lord Jesus are preserved, this being a standing and ever-living Protestation. And hence the Rage and Malice of the Devil and *Prelates*, the Tutor and Pupils, are most set against such who don't hear, and of whom they are most afraid. 'Tis true, Ministers do *witness*, when they are deposed for *Non-Submission*: But do ye not herein destroy what ye built? Ye submit to them; ye do not serve them as *Officers*, yet as common *Soldiers* ye do.

8- Ye do hereby waken the Consciences of *Prelates* and *Curates*; for *not bearing*, is, and will be a continual *Sting* to them: And, when ye hear, ye keep them from conceiving of themselves to be such *Monsters* as they are. Therefore turn away, that they may be *ashamed*. But, by Fellowship with them, ye let their Souls perish, and so are cruel to them. *Withdrawing* now is the only Means left that can do them good: 'Tis the Lord's own Mean, however little it promise, 2 *Thess.* ii. 14. *If any Man walk disorderly, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed.* Christ, in Compassion to their Souls, which are of the same Make with your's, commands you to withdraw from them, that you may not let them die thro' a cruel Guiltiness. *He that spareth the Rod hateth the Child,* Prov. xiii. 24. We may apply Medicines to a Hand or Foot, when there's any Hope of Healing; but, if there's none, *immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum*;

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that is, *An incurable Wound must be cut off by the Surgeon's Instrument.*

9. By *joining* with the *Curates*, ye are kept from shewing your *Loyalty* to your *King* and *Master*, the Lord Jesus Christ. How shall ye, that are private Persons, otherways shew your *Dislike* of their Way and *Rebellion* against the Lord? Where is your *Testimony* and *standing Protestation* against all the scandalous *Enormities* and *Abuses* ye see? Oh! therefore, for the Lord's Sake, withdraw.

10. Do ye not, by this Means, sadden the Hearts of the *Righteous*, who dare not join with them at all? And, by your Example, ye furnish the *Prelates* with Weapons and Courage to attack the *Fearers* of God, when they see us divided amongst ourselves; And your Example shall be as the first *Dart* thrown at us, and as a *Warrant* to their Conscience to think us wrong, seeing we are disowned by our own Party, who are known godly Men; and therefore, thinking our Practice wrong, will be bold to inflict Punishment upon us. Ye likeways sadden the Hearts of the *Righteous*; and tho' by this Means ye keep yourselves *secure*, and make the *Curates* rejoice, yet ye cause others *mourn* in private before the Lord. *Come, therefore, out of Babel, O Soldiers of the Almighty, lest the Lord burn you up with them.* Consider but these Things. Is it a small Matter to be related to them? Do ye pray against them, and their Ways, and yet in Practice join with them? Is it a small Matter to involve yourselves in their *Plagues*? Is it a small Matter to grieve the Hearts of the *Godly*? To harden *Curates*? To strengthen them in their evil Ways To get a *Snare* to your own Souls? Oh! think seriously on this.

*Object.* Consequences cannot be a Ground of withdrawing. We cannot quit a Duty for what may come of it, else we shall never do any Thing: For there



there is nothing we can do but Evil may come of it. I answer, By distinguishing of Consequences, some follow accidentally upon a Thing, as hardning of Heart doth Preaching, *Isa. vi. 9, 10.* and some natural in their own Tendency. Consequences that follow by Accident, do not warrant us to quit Duty. And hence we are to profess Christ in Times of Persecution, tho' it expose us to Suffering, as in *Daniel's praying to God, Dan. vi. 10.* compared with 16. Because Suffering doth follow by Accident, and is not by that Act of Profession caused at all. But, if in *Daniel's Chamber* there were set a Guard to murder him secretly, and he got Notice of it, no doubt he were not to pray. No more were a Minister bound to preach, when he knew a Snare to be laid for his Life: For his coming to that Place, did, as Things stood, in its own Nature expose him to Death. But if a Persecutor should discharge him and all the Ministers to preach Christ, out of a known Design to root out all Religion, I dare not say, notwithstanding of what is presently practised, he were bound to leave off: *For better obey God than Man.* Accidental Consequences are no Ground for suspending a positive Duty: But such Consequences as flow from the Nature of the Thing itself, do warrant us to suspend the Duty. And the forenamed Consequences do not flow merely by Accident from hearing of the Curate. But Hearing is an Act of Worship, and is, as the former Sign of our Subjection to *Presbytery*, now made the Law to those in thir Nations. The Badge doth, in its own Nature, and *per se*, lead to it in its own Nature; it unites us to them in its own Nature; it hardens the Curates in their Way in its own Nature; grieves the Godly in its own Nature; it turns the Hearers lukewarm; and leavens them, tho' they know not how nor why. But it is observable, that many, formerly zealous for the Lord's Work and People, are, by  
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hearing of the *Curates*, turned very cold and remiss, and engaged in Affection some Way to them.

But ye may instance, That then we could not, tho' in *New-England*, join with the Ministers there, they being *Independents*, and we *Presbyterians*, because Hearing is a Mean to harden them in their Error. I answer in three Things to this. (1.) To raise a Division in *New-England*, by withdrawing, is, I suppose, a greater Evil than any Strengthening of my Hearing of their Ministers might contribute to them, or to their Government. 'Tis not so with *Prelates*, who have kindled the Fire already, and with whom, in Defence of what we were in Possession, we are already engaged in a Controversy. (2.) I deny that my Forbearing to hear, or my Hearing, would any Way weaken or establish *Independency* in *New-England*, seeing 'tis already established. And my Hearing of them would not be interpreted a Strengthening of the Government; for it, being established, stands not in Need of, nor seeks that, but would be the Sign of my Respect to the Ordinance of Christ. I confess, if *Independency* were in *ad fieri*, or to be established, and wanted nothing but the universal Hearing of the People, the Case were otherways. But *Prelacy*, however established by Law, and by the Submission of Officers, and by the practical Submission of the most Part of the Body of the Land, yet is not perfectly universally established, until all standing out against it submit by hearing the Officers. (3.) 'Tis not alike in *Independency* and *Prelacy*; the one is wrong as to the Manner of Government, and some Circumstances only, but is not substantially violated: For there are no unlawful Officers in that Government, tho' it be defective in Point of *Synodical Jurisdiction*. In *Prelacy* the Government is substantially violated, and there are in it unlawful Officers; and from these unlawful Acts, is it that all  
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the Acts of Office in the Church do spring. And hence there is no such Ground for not hearing, in *New-England*, of *Independent Ministers*, (whose Authority, by the powerful Influences of his Spirit let out on Hearers, both in converting and confirming, God hath sealed) as there is for not hearing *Prelates* and *Curates* here.

S E C T. VII.

*Wherein a seventh Argument is handled, drawn from some providential Considerations.*

WHEN Christ was in the World, there were great Controversies about Religion, as there are now; the *Pharisees* saying one Thing, and Christ saying another. And therefore, to put the Question out of Debate, they desire a *Sign out of Heaven* from him. Christ is willing to give them a *Sign*, but would not humour them in *adulterous Conceits*, but shews that the *Times* afforded *Signs* and *Works*, to which they looking might thereby prognosticate what was *Truth* or *Duty*; at least, might be helped and confirmed; which yet their *Hardness* could not see, tho' they knew the *Signs* of the *Sky*. Oh! that we would, while seeking *Clearness* in this, observe but the *Signs* of this *Time*, and see what *God*, by his *Providence*, doth own. And, for this Cause, I shall propound some *providential Considerations*, whereby a Man may see what is *Duty*, as it were, revealed from *Heaven*. Oh! consider then, and reject not the *Operations* of the *Lord*, Psalm xxviii. 5.

*Consider. I.* Not hearing is the Ground of the *Sufferings* of the *Lord's People*. It is because they dare not hear, they are oppressed, impoverished, quartered upon, and imprisoned; and is likewise the Cause and Occasion of the Spilling of their *Blood*: And therefore to *hear* draws deeper than at first View it would seem to do, even to a *Condemnation* of the *Righteous*; yea, it is a proclaiming them to be *Self-Murderers*.

ers. Ye say, ye do not condemn them; but verily ye do; for, in Hearing, ye hold, that the *Conformists* Preaching is an *Ordinance* of God: And what were they then but a Company of poor deluded People, thro' the Wrath of God, that were so far left of God, as to lose Fortunes and Lives, and all to seal a Lie? Ye furnish Arguments to their *Accusers* to condemn them, and minister strengthening Cordials to their Adversaries Conscience to go on boldly *against* them. And is this the Kindness, Respect and Love ye have to your Brethren, and the Friends of our Lord Jesus? What do ye know but their *Blood* may be *required at your Hands*? We should stop to offend, much less condemn the Generation of God's Children.

*Consider. 2.* It is considerable that our Church now is in a *backsliding* Condition: The Godly are *in foro possessorio*, not in *petitorio*. The Church is not as she was in *Edward VI's* Time, and in *Queen Elisabeth's*, getting out and recovering from the *Popish* Darknes, nor are, we may say, stolen to Corruption by Degrees, as it was in *Christ's* Time. But, while our Eyes were waking, living under the *Vine of Presbytery*, as we thought *established by all Securities imaginable*, on a sudden the *Prelates*, with a violent Motion, are come in upon us, and, being *backed* with the *Laws* of the Kingdom, have *extended* their Power over us, and are striving, with their utmost Might, to make a compleat Conquest, and to wrest all our Privileges from us; to whom all have submitted in some Measure; only some few who resolve to do no Deed to the *Hurting* and *Prejudice* of *Christ's* Cause; which is what occasions their Establishment not to be compleat. And therefore, this being the Condition and Case, in which, by the Lord's Providence, we are cast, we are called to stand to *our Liberties*, and to *keep the Ground* we have *gained*, and not to *turn back* at all, nor *give Back*. We were in *Possession*, and are as yet in *Part*. It is our Duty to *hold fast what we have*. This Distincti-

on is very evident from Scripture. While Paul was speaking to the Jews, and such as had not received the Christian Customs, he became all Things to all Men, and did wink at many of their Ceremonies, as is abundantly clear; but, in Places where these were cast off, he would not part with an Hoof. Therefore stand fast to your Liberties, wherewith Christ hath made you free. We are Defenders, let us keep Possession. If the Case were otherways, many Things might be winked at and tolerated. To submit now to the Prelates, is Apostasy and Backsliding. And hence Christ himself tolerated (I say not allowed) many Things, or rather did bear many Things in the Jewish Church, which had crept in while the Servants were sleeping; but still kept what was gained, and did hold fast, and give no Ground. It is one of the Christian's Motto's and Maxims, to hold fast what he hath, and to be going on to Perfection, Gal. v. 1. Rev. iii. 3. Heb. vi. 1.

Consider. 3. It is observable, that our Engagements, both by Oath and Practice, and otherways, are greater against this Government than against any other unlawful Government; and in these Nations, especially SCOTLAND, above any other Nation, and at this Time above any other Time. No other Nation than ourselves, at any Time before, were ever so expressly bound and engaged against it, as we are now. Never was the Evil of it so sadly felt or clearly seen by any as by us. Never more Pains, Blood and Estate, spent by any Nation, than by us in these Nations. It was Christ's only open Enemy since the Reformation. And, if our Entertainment of this Fury of Hell should be diverse from, or more rough, when now it hath appeared, than the Behaviour of other Nations to it, or of our own Predecessors, it were no Wonder. And shall we, after all this, again join with the People of these Abominations, Ezra ix. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. For we were Bond-Men, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our Bondage; but hath extended Mercy unto us in the  
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*Sight of the Kings of Persia, to give us a Reviving, to set up the House of our God, and to repair the Desolations thereof, and to give us a Wall in Judah, and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, What shall we say after this! for we have forsaken thy Commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy Servants the Prophets, saying, The Land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean Land with the Filthiness of the People of the Lands, with their Abominations, which have filled it from one End to another, with their Uncleanness. Now therefore give not your Daughters unto their Sons, neither take their Daughters unto your Sons, nor seek their Peace, or their Wealth for ever: That ye may be strong, and eat the Good of the Land, and leave it for an Inheritance to your Children for ever. And, after all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds, and for our great Trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, and hast given us such Deliverance as this, Should we again break thy Commandments, and join in Affinity with the People of these Abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us; so that there should be no Remnant nor Escaping?*

*Consider. 4.* It is very remarkable, we have ado with *uncontroverted* Enemies to Christ and Godliness; Persons not so much as pretending Holiness; not with godly Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, Austin, and other devout Bishops; not with pious Shepherd, Cotton or Hooker, who were Independents, but with open Enemies, whose Sins were written beforehand, 1 Tim. v. 24. We have no Mask of Holiness to reverence, love, or be tender of. But we have ado with such as declare their Sin as Sodom, and Gomorrah like, hide it not; whose Behaviour and Works do evidently declare whose they are; so that there is the less Hazard, and greater Encouragement to the Lord's People to withdraw. Sure we separate neither from Saints, nor from visible Saints, if we can know a Thorn-Tree from a Vine: And there is no Motive or Encouragement to Communion;

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nion; and all these Evils are not *mere* Infirmities, but are *aggravated* by the *Dispensation of Light*, in which they have *committed their Lewdness*. It is sad, when we cannot compassionate them as *Ignorants*, unless it be as such who are *wilfully* so, nay, are *obstinate* in it. There hath been *much pleading* with them; and the Lord's *Providences* and *Pains* might have by this Time convinced them, but they will not be reclaimed. And therefore, since there's no Hope of *prevailing*, let us *separate*, Acts. xix. 9. *But when diverse were hardened, and believed not, but spake Evil of that Way before the Multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples, disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus.* And, in Token of this, they have *established their Iniquity by a Law*, and have made the Bars of their Prison so strong, in that they have made it *Treason to speak against the Government*. Despair therefore saith, *Separate. Ephraim is joined to Idols; let him alone*, Hof. iv. 17. Matth. xv. 14. *Let them alone, they be blind Leaders of the Blind.*

*Consider.* 5. It is observable, that the Lord, by the inward Feeling of his Presence, in comforting, strengthening and sanctifying, doth *approve those who have gone from them*; in so much that many have found, that the Day in which they have resolved not to hear the *Curates*, has been a *Day of Jubilee*, like the *acceptable Year*; and that their Bands have been loosed from that Day forward; and might justly say, *Eben-ezer, Hitherto hath God helped us.* And shall we shut our Eyes against this Light? And I have known and been informed of many, that, while they heard, have been under continual *Confusions, Distempers and Clouds*, who, breaking off since that, have been looked upon graciously. And, if this be not the *Seal of God's Spirit*, Eph. i. 13. What will ye then make it to be? It is true, I deny not but godly Men may hear them, and many do. But let them consider if they be not *discountenanced of God in the Matter.*

Matter. And truly many who hear, tho' godly, and to be so reputed in Charity, yet, by the sad Frame of their Spirit, which they express, and some unhappy Things breaking out in their Conversations, in reference to the Times, do visibly shew, that they are *not approved* of God in what they do, and preacheth aloud that none be *stumbled* by them, or led thro' their Example, seeing *all Flesh is Grass*; and therefore should look to the Lord, and his Testimony. And what all this should signify were worth while to enquire into, and ponder sadly. When God doth not answer, as at other Times; it is a Token there is a *Controversy*, Micah iii. 6. *Therefore Night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a Vision; and it shall be dark unto you; that ye shall not divine; and the Sun shall go down over the Prophets; and the Day shall be dark over them.*

*Consider. 6.* And it is no less observable, that the *most strict; tender and godly* (and no born Idiots either) both amongst Ministers and Professors, are *against Hearing*. I desire to make no Comparisons; only what the Lord speaks, and would have declared, we cannot but speak. What may be among Persons and in Places where I am not so well acquainted, I cannot speak; but among mine own Acquaintance it is so. If a Part in *Scotland* be more *religious* than another, there are generally more *Non-Hearers*, and greater *Disconformity*, than in other Places. And is it a credible Thing that the Lord would suffer the *most godly and zealous* to err in this, and *reveal his Mind* to them who are *less zealous*? *John vii. 17. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* *Matth. xiii. 12. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more Abundance.*

*Consider. 7.* And, to confirm this, let us consider, that the *Prelates and Curates Pollution bordereth* and hath *Influence*, not only on their Persons, but on their Office. Their very Authority, by which they preach,



is vitiated and unlawful; and by us sworn against. So that the Question is not, Whether *personal* Corruptions be a Ground of Separation, as it was with the *Donatists*, *Brownists*, and *Separatists*; but this is it, Whether an *ungodly* Person exercising Acts of Authority in holy Things, and that by an *unlawful* Authority, is to be acknowledged? Now, enquire at the *Curates*, By what *Authority* do ye these Things? They must and cannot but answer thus, We do it by *Authority* of the *Prelate*.

*Consider. 8.* And it is observable, that, as those that are in a private Station can give no other significant Testimony for the Lord; so the *Prelates*, *Curates*, and their Abettors, are more curious that we should hear, than for any Thing else. And hence, tho' ye be not examined by them, communicate not with them, sit not in Sessions with them, yet ye are *tolerated*; but *Hearing* they cannot; nay, will not, by any Means, dispense with. *Hear* them, and they seek no more for *establishing* of their *Authority*. *Hear* them, and testify for Zion's King, against this Encroachment, if ye can. The Devil, that *Spirit that ruleth in the Children of Disobedience*, hath ever been so wise in his Instruments, as to batter and discredit what hath been the most destructive Engine to his Interest and Kingdom; and hence, in all Ages, hath opposed that, and sought to bear it down. And hence, in the *primitive* Times, the *open Preaching* of Christ was sought to be *trampled under foot*. And now mark the great Butt the *Children of Disobedience* shoot at, *viz. not Hearing and Conventicling*.

*Consider. 9.* That the *Parliament*, by their Laws and Acts, have declared *Hearing* to be a *Sign* of the Subjects approving of the *Government*; so that *Hearing* is (as it were) the *Bridal Favour*, the *Sign of Compliance*, the *τεκμήριον* and *τὸ κριόμενον* of those that *subject* themselves. And the *Parliament* were no Fools in judging that *approving*, which indeed

deed is not; *Hearing* being all that private Christians, as such, did formerly, and now can do, in order to Submission and *acknowledging* of the Government. And therefore did the *Parliament* require this of them, as the most proper Sign of their *Approbation* of the Government.

*Consider.* 10. It is observable likewise, that those that *bear* not do *thereby expose* themselves to *Suffering*; and there is no *Hazard* of *Suffering* to those that *bear*, or in *bearing*. And it is to be presumed, that that which *Persecutors* are for, and which is seconded by the Relation of *Prejudice* and *Loss*, uses not to be the *Truth*, and any *Light* to be gotten by such Considerations is to be *suspected*. It hath been seldom heard, that *Preferments* are conferred for *Adherence* to the *Truth*, Gal. v. 11. And I, *Brethren*, if I yet *preach Circumcision*, why do I yet *suffer Persecution*? Then is the *Offence of the Cross* ceased. As if *Paul* had said, "To *preach Circumcision* cannot be *right*, seeing, by this Means, the *Offence of the Cross* shall *cease*, and I shall *suffer no Persecution*:" But it is absurd to imagine, that the *Offence shall cease*." So do I say, Why do the *Godly* yet *suffer Persecution*, if it be *lawful* to *bear*? And then, in their Times of *Persecution*, the *Cross* shall *cease*. For *bear*, and ye shall get *Leave* to live at *Ease*, and in *Peace*, and shall not be *troubled*.

For my own Experience, if I were desirous, or could think that any *Weight* might be laid thereon, I could say much more than now I am resolved to say. But, for *Exoneration* of myself at the Hands of others, I only now let the *Reader* know, that, at first, I was for *bearing*, and accordingly heard *Frelates* and *Curates* of all Sorts; till at last I was made to suspect my *Practice*, and to spend some *Thoughts* in examining the Matter. And, at first, I saw the *Grounds* for *Hearing* to be but *very weak*: And the more I searched, the more confused I was, and doubt-  
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the more of my Practice. And, when I went in any Frame to the Church, I returned distempered; and, what I took for strengthening, I found to poison and weaken me, and daily decayed, knowing, after the strictest Search, no other Cause imaginable. Wearied thus, and uncertain what to do, yet suspecting the Matter, as I was going on the Lord's Day to hear a *Curate*, I was much pressed to stay at Home, and, in a Word, I could not get *Liberty* to go: I hereupon looked up to the Lord, desiring him he would shew me his Will in this, and that, if it was his Command I should forbear, he would shew some Testimony of Approbation thereof in private this Day, if he, in his Wisdom, thought good; and so I staid at home. And what shall I say? That which in many Days I could not get, that Day I found and felt the Lord's Presence most sensibly, and ever since in some Measure; from the Time I left off Hearing, till I saw farther, and examined the Case more narrowly; which then I was not in such a Capacity, nor at such Leisure to do: Nor hath the Lord been wanting to me since, and when others were at Sermon. I have used all means for Information herein; and, after my most impartial Search; after my most sincere and zealous Prayers, and Fasting of purpose too, for the Revelation of Truth; after Conference with others; after Meditation and Consideration; after reading the Scriptures; after, I say, the Use of all these Means, I have rather been confirmed in it, and the more clear I was not to bear. And I remember, being to die, and cast up my Accounts, the Remembrance of my Practice herein, and that thereby I did testify for the Lord, was that in which, in my Conscience, I had most Testimony and Approbation of God, of any Action or Course I ever did or followed in all my Life-Time. I have been Witness to the Confession of those who hear, plainly declaring to me, That they have *no great*

Clearness in this their Practice. I have been an Ear and Eye-Witness to the sad Exercise of Spirit and Soul-Trouble, which some of the most eminent Servants of Jesus Christ I ever knew, were put to for *their Hearing*; and of their blessed Outgate upon their Resolution to withdraw, and the Lord's after gracious Dealing with them. So that if I should doubt any farther, I should shut my Eyes, as it were, against the Sun \*.

More Considerations to this Purpose might be given, but I hold these sufficient at present. I know Providences are not our Bible, nor do I advance the above-mentioned Ones to make them the Ground of any Man's Faith. Blessed be God, who hath given us a more sure Ground, than a Voice from Heaven, to build on. I look upon these as Confirmations of other Grounds which I have given, and shall give. But, Oh that these at least may have Influence on you all, so as to engage you to search for God's Will, and

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\* *In regard some People have been prepossessed with a groundless Conceit, that this excellent Treatise was not writ by the worthy Gentleman whose Name it bears, it is thought proper to acquaint the Reader, that, if he will be at the Pains to compare this Account of the Author's withdrawing from hearing the Curates, with what he has advanced, upon the same Subject, in the Memoirs of his Life, written by himself, printed at Edinburgh, Anno 1738. Chap. 6. Sect. 4. Pag. 152, 153, 154. he cannot entertain the least Doubt or Scruple anent the Genuineness of this Performance. And it appears, from his Memoirs, that he withdrew from hearing the Curates in the Year 1663. Nay farther, in Chap. 6. Sect. 7. Pag. 199. he tells that he wrote a Treatise against hearing the Curates; which he appears to have done in the Year 1668 or 1669.*

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and that ye may seriously consider what may be the Language of God in all this! And, *lastly*, for *Confirmation* to all, who have *forsaken the Tabernacles of these wicked Men*. Oh! that all of you would look upon the Case rightly. Oh! take a right View of Things in the Glass of God's Word, comparing it with his providential Administrations.

And, to conclude this Argument, know, that as the *old red Dragon* hath been ever, by this unhappy Engine *Prelacy*, as most *accommodated* to his Purpose, seeking to *overturn the Interest of Christ* in this Land: So now again, being oftentimes *foiled before*, he hath taken the Field *once more*, with his Followers, against the *Lamb*, and hath *denounced open War*, upon account of the *old Cause*. The *Prelates* are the Devil's *General-Officers*, the *Curates* are his *Under-Officers* and *Commanders*. *Prelacy* is the *Banner* under which all Evils have mustered since the Reformation: Open Profanity and gross Evils durst not openly denounce *War*; only *Prelacy* hath *openly dared* him; and other Evils shelter under it, and, like Chickens, are hatched, and grow up under *Prelates* Wings, till they be able to fend for themselves (as we say.) And, tho' it hath been many Times worsted and overcome, yet now its Abettors are resolved to hazard all; and therefore are come, like *Gog and Magog*, against the Lord's *Inheritance*, and fallen, like a Flood bearing all before them, upon the *Sanctuary*, the *carved Work of Reformation*, and the Saints and People of God; and all this is come about, ere we were well awaked to see what the Matter is. But now, all ye that love our Lord Jesus Christ, Oh! lay this to Heart. *Lift up, ye Watchmen upon Jerusalem's Walls, your Voice like a Trumpet, and sound the Alarm of War*. Ye *private Christians* and *Soldiers of Zion's Head and King*, get to your *General's Camp*, and *take your Arms*. What have you ado to *muster* under the *Banner of Prelacy*. Behold, the Lord  
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saith unto you, *Whosoever is for the Lord Jesus, let him turn in hither; remove from the Tents of these wicked Men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest ye be consumed in their Ruin.* Carry, therefore, unto them, as unto Persons who are signally and avowedly engaged in Rebellion against the Lord: And, by separating from them, shew whose you are, and whom you serve: And thus give open Evidence, that ye are of another Party, Cause and Way.

## S E C T. VIII.

*Wherein other Arguments, before hinted at, are briefly laid down and confirmed.*

Arg. VIII. THOSE who are not Ministers, ought neither to preach nor be heard. But the Curates are not Ministers; and therefore are not to be heard. (1.) The first Proposition is clear from Rom. x. 14, 15—*How shall they hear without a Preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?* (2.) Where there is no Relation, there can be no Act of Office flowing from that Relation; and therefore no Hearing, which is a relative Act. (3.) Hearing, in this Case, would be a Countenancing a most horrid Impiety and Presumption, viz. such as preach as sent Ministers, and yet, in the mean Time, are none. For the Assumption, I have proven it in Chap. 2. Sect. 3. to which I refer the Reader.

Arg. IX. The Conformists should not preach; therefore we should not hear. I have proven the Antecedent in Chap. 2. Sect. 4. to which the Reader is referred. I prove the Consequent, viz. *That we should not hear the Conformists.* (1.) Because their Preaching in that Case is sinful, not only as to the Manner, but as to the Act itself. As, therefore, we should not countenance Sin, so no more should we countenance the Preaching of the Curates, which is from an unlawful Authority. (2.) Relations mutu-  
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ally constitute and destroy themselves. *Relata se mutuo ponunt & tollunt.* And therefore their *Preaching*, as to the *Act*, being *sinful* in itself, *Hearing*, which is its correlate *Act*, is likewise *sinful*. And, as they should not preach, so neither should we hear. (3.) *Hearing* in this Case *strengthens* them in their *Sin*.

*Arg. X.* 'Tis Duty to *separate* from the *Prelates* and the *Curates* in a *personal Conversation*, as is granted by all tender Christians, and by others generally, except a few; who, to warrant their own familiar *Eating*, *Drinking*, and *Converse* with them, do therefore maintain all *Fellowship* *lawful*. To which I may speak something ere I conclude. And therefore *personal Conversation* being *unlawful*, so is *official*, or *Fellowship* with the *Curates* while they are *exercising their Office*, as in *Preaching*. See the Proof of the Connexion of the first Proposition in *Chap. 2. Sect. 6.*

*Arg. XI.* The *Curates* themselves are *scandalous*, and preach by an *unlawful usurped Authority*; and therefore are not to be *heard*. And I leave it to be considered, whether a *Traitor*, really engaged in open *Rebellion* against his *Prince*, officiating by an *unlawful Power* from the *Usurper*, should be acknowledged by the *Subjects*, which *Usurper* they are under a *solemn Vow* to extirpate. The Proof of my *first Proposition* ye may in Part know by your own Sense; and by what I have said in *Chap. 2. Sect. 2.*

*Arg. XII.* It is *unlawful* to go to *Synods*, as is acknowledged; and therefore it is *unlawful* to *hear*. For the *Bishop* hath *Power of Ordination* as well as *Jurisdiction*, and the *Curates* in both have submitted unto the *Prelate*, and the *Prelate* exerciseth *Power* in both: If, therefore, ye *disown* *Bishops Synods*, because of the *Prelate's Authority* in them, ye must, upon the same Account, *disown* the *Curates Preaching*, because whatever they *do authoritatively*, they do

it by the Bishop's Power; for *regimental* Acts and *doctrinal* Acts do proceed from the *same* Fountain. Ye will say ye hear, because of their former Ordination received from *Presbytery*. *Ans.* Why not sit with them in *Synods*, seeing, by their Ordination, they have Power to sit in *Synods*, as well as to *preach*? Ye will say, The Bishop actually exerciseth Power in the one, not so in the other. *I answer*, He actually exerciseth Power in the *Curate's* Preaching, as well as in the *Curate's* Ruling: And the *Curate's* Preaching by the *Prelate's* Power, is a *material* and *real* Proclamation of his Power; for he receives Power to *preach*, as well as to *rule*, from the *Prelate*; because *de facto* all Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination is in the *Prelate*, and he may *restrain*, or *let out*, as he pleases.

*Object.* Then all that follows, is, That we cannot submit to such Acts as flow from the *Prelate's* Authority, such as sitting in *Synods*, in the Exercise of which, since they proceed from the *Prelate's* Power, we cannot in Conscience join: But their Acts of Preaching flow from their former Authority, and not from the *Prelates*. *Synodical* Meetings were discharged, not *Preaching*, but continue in a direct uninterrupted Line; and therefore would seem to continue and run in the old Channel, and the *Prelate* is not personally present in the *Curates* Preaching, as he is in *Synods*.

*I answer*, (1.) As I said, I see no greater Ground for the one than for the other; for the *Curate's* Power to preach doth flow from the *Prelate*, as well as his Power to rule. And, tho' the *Curates* do not rule in *Synods* absolutely and immediately under Christ, yet do they rule in Subordination to the *Prelate*. And, tho' the *Prelate* be not personally present in the *Curates* Preaching, yet he is, in his *Spirit* and *Power*, present, and that by an *authoritative* Act related to the *supreme* Authority of *Prelacy*, and issuing out and restrained according to the good Pleasure of the *sovereign* *Prelate*. But,

(2.) For



(2.) For that Interruption that hath befallen Synods, 'tis very accidental unto the Authority from which such Meetings do flow; only a fine Shift to keep off Credit. For suppose Synods had not been discharged by Law, nor raised, but continued even as *sessional Meetings*, yet the first Synod called and indicted by the *Prelate*, in which he should sit, as now he doth, with his negative Voice, were an *Episcopal Synod*: Even so Acts of Preaching, flowing from Persons ingrafted in the *Episcopal Root*, are Acts of Office proceeding from the *Prelate*; and so, *whosoever doth partake of the Sacrifice offered on this Altar, is Partaker of the Altar itself*, 1 Cor. x. 18. I mean the *Prelate's* Power, in whom all Power is as in the Fountain; ever since the Time of the *Curates* Union with the *Prelate*; I say, from that Time forth, their Preaching doth flow from the *Prelate*. For, as it is accidental to the Union of an Imp to a Root or Stock, to be long or short disunited, even so it is with their Union with the *Prelate*, to be short or long disunited with him. Ye cannot say the Imp is not united to the Stock, because, until the Time of its imping, it remained on the old Stock, tho' it was not cut off, and, for some Time, disunited to any Stock: Even so the *Conformists* Authority of Preaching, tho' it did not proceed from the *Prelate*, until the very Time of their Submission, by which they were cut off from the *Presbyterial Root*, and immediately ingrafted in the *Prelate*; I say, being now united to him, doth flow from the *Prelate*, as well as their Rule. *Synodical Meetings* were in the Root of *Presbyterial*, when these Meetings were raised and discharged, and did not flourish for a long Time, but continued so until the *Prelate* came, and called and gave Being unto a new Synod. And then the Power of calling Synods, residing virtually and fundamentally in the collective Body of *Presbytery*, (lying dead for the Time, as to actual Motion) did, I say, by this their Union with

with the *Prelate*, receive Life, at least an *analogical* Life.

(3.) And so Preaching, being an *authoritative* Act, as well as Church-Censures and Jurisdiction, must proceed in that Church, wherever it is exercised, from that Fountain from which all Power is professed to proceed and issue, the Officer professing Submission thereunto. Wherever the Streams of Power are, they must proceed from the Fountain: But the *Prelate*, *de facto*, as I have oft said, is the Fountain of all Power, whether of Ordination or Jurisdiction: And therefore all Power, and Acts of Power, relating either to Jurisdiction or Ordination, must proceed from him. And therefore, seeing the Power to preach is conveyed by the Deed of Gift of *Ordination*, the Power of dispensing of that Deed of Gift being in the *Prelate*, their actual Preaching must proceed from him, as well as their juridical Acts; for he hath the one and the other in himself. And, tho' there be no explicit or express Ordination to many, whereby the *Prelate* doth expressly declare so much, that he communicateth Power to them, yet the Laws of the Land, whereby all Jurisdiction, and Power, and Privileges are given to the *Prelate*, in the same Way, and in the same Manner, as amply as ever they had it in this Kingdom before, (as in the *second* Act of King *James VI.* anent the *Restitution of Bishops*, in the *18th* Parliament, *anno* 1606. imports, to which the late Act is relative, restoring them) together with the Principles of *Prelates* sufficiently known, promulgate and declare all Power in him, the *Curates* submitting to them, and concurring with the *Prelates*, is an equivalent receiving Commission, when ye receive it, and ye receive it when he gives it.

(4.) Their *Preaching* cannot be said to flow from a *Presbyterial* Authority; for there cannot be *two supreme Powers* with reference to Church-Matters: For, as the one should give Life, and Power, and Autho-

Authority to *Preaching*, and the other to *Acts of Rule*, seeing *Preaching* falls under the Cognizance of *Acts of Discipline and Rule*, (for it may judged and censured by him in whom the Power of Jurisdiction is) the Officers, for their *Preaching* erroneous Doctrine, may be deposed. But 'tis certainly known, that *Curates* are actually under the *Prelates* as to Jurisdiction. And therefore it is foolish to distinguish those *Acts of Office* that do proceed from the *Prelate*, and those that do not.

(5.) It is manifest, that the *Curates* *Preaching* doth flow from the *Prelate*, seeing he adds, pares and regulates it, and suspends and deposes the Preachers as he pleases; otherways, in case of Censure, the *Curates* might reply, That the *Prelates* meddled with what did not concern them; and we have only submitted in regimental *Acts*, but not in doctrinal *Acts* that we had from *Presbytery*. If they would speak thus, the *Prelate* would quickly make them know their Error by a Sentence of Deposition. None can put out of Office, but he who instals in it.

It may be said, That the Power in *Prelacy* is and was the same that was formerly, only in different Subjects, and administred diversly. The Power was in many before, but now it is in one. But, for Answer, I say, That this makes as much for coming to *Synods*, as for coming to *hear*. (2.) Christ did not intrust it to one; and we did swear to *extirpate* that Power as in one; and so never to draw Authority from, or acknowledge Authority as in that one. Shall we then acknowledge *Acts of Office* flowing from that one? And so, that it is the same Power *materially*, is true; but that it is the same Power *formally*, I deny.

## S E C T. IX.

*Wherein an Argument, taken from the Solemn League and Covenant, is handled.*

THE *rank Wits* of this adulterous and evil Generation have been, and are in nothing more employed, than in cutting asunder the Bonds of the *holy and solemn Oath of the Covenant*. It is but Measure for Measure, if we should endeavour to loose the Lord's People from any *seeming* Tye of Subjection they might seem to owe to this *prelatick Authority*, that, while they intend to loose the Obligation of the *Covenant*, they stir not up some sleeping and living peaceably, not only to consider and defend the Validity of the Oath, but the Extent of it; that is, not only whether we be bound to do the Duties therein mentioned, but likewise how far this *extirpating of Prelacy* may oblige us; and whether, being bound to *extirpate* that Government, we are left in any Capacity to hear *Curates*, who are Officers acting in Subordination to that Government.

I do suppose, in the *first* Place, That the whole Nation are engaged in the Oath of the Covenant, it being a real *national Oath*, and not a *personal Oath* only. 2dly. I suppose that this Oath, as to *Matter and Substance*, was and is a *lawful Oath*, in all the Articles thereof, from which it is, in no Case, *lawful to refuse*, without *manifest and sinful Perjury*. These Things are clear to all, for whose Sakes I have taken this Pains; and shall not meddle with any Thing touching the *Lawfulness* of it; but shall proceed to form an Argument from it against *Hearing of the Curates*; which I shall do in the Form of a *Sorites*, by opening up four distinct Propositions; supposing, as hath been cleared, that Preaching is an Act of Office proceeding from the *Prelate's Authority*.

Imo. *Those*

1mo. *Those that are bound to extirpate a Government, are bound not to acknowledge that Government.*

2do. *Those that are bound not to acknowledge the Government, are bound not to acknowledge the Governors.*

3tio. *Whoever are bound not to acknowledge the Governors in chief, are bound not to acknowledge inferior Officers acting under them.*

4to. *Whoever are bound not to acknowledge the Governors, are bound not to acknowledge or submit to any Acts of Office proceeding from these Governors or Rulers. Therefore,*

*Whoever are bound to extirpate the Government of Prelacy, (as we all are) are bound not to acknowledge or submit, by Hearing, to the Curates Acts of Preaching.*

#### PROPOSITION I.

*We are not to submit to that Government which we are bound to extirpate.*

FOR clearing of this, these Things would be premised. (1.) That, when I say we are bound to extirpate Prelacy, it be conceived thus, that we are lawfully bound; for an Oath cannot be a Bond of Iniquity, else David should have killed Nabal, and the Jews should have murdered Paul. (2.) That to rule in general is not unlawful; but to rule in such a Manner, as Lords of God's Heritage, is unlawful. (3.) That, whereas we have sworn to extirpate Prelacy; it must be understood of every one in their several Capacities, and as the Lord will give Opportunity. There are several Means of extirpating Prelacy; such as Speaking, Writing, Praying, Preaching and Fighting against it, denying all Concurrence and Assistance to them that may strengthen, harden or encourage them in their Way. Now, all these forementioned Ways of extirpating Prelacy, are not always binding upon all Persons;

Persons, because all these Means do not ly in the respective Capacity of all Persons; for all Persons are not bound to preach, fight and write against it. Hence Ministers are bound to preach against *Prelacy*; those that are enabled with Parts and Gifts, are bound to dispute and write against it; private Christians are bound to pray against it, and to withdraw what may be conceived an Assistance to them, and, as Occasion serves, to speak against it; and those that are intrusted with Power should go *forth to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty*; wise Men should assist with their Counsel, and rich Men with their Means. So then all cannot preach, write and fight against it, because neither Strength, Office, Parts nor Employments call for this at all Men's Hands. Yea, some Acts may and ought to be done by the same Persons at one Time, which ought not to be done at another, because a Door of Opportunity may be opened at one Time, and not at another. The *Israelites* were bound, when they came to *Canaan*, to destroy all the Idols; but this lay not upon them while in *Egypt*. Yet now it follows, tho' we be not always bound by all Means to *extirpate Prelacy*, yet sure we are never to do any Act that may establish it, or such as countenance it.

These Things being thus premised, I prove the *Proposition* (which yet in itself is sufficiently plain) thus. (1.) Because all Submission is due by the Command of God; but no *Government*, that we are bound to *extirpate*, can be *lawful*, and so cannot be of God: And therefore there cannot be Submission due thereunto, *Rom. xiii. 1.* As the Authority of Kings is from God, so is the Obedience of their Subjects due to it upon that Account, *Col. iii. 23. Eph. vi. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3.* Kings owe it to God that their Subjects do reverence them; and hence they are to expect *most Loyalty* from the *Saints*, whatever they think. (2.) Because, to *extirpate* a Government, and yet *submit* unto and *acknowledge* that Government, is

*contradictory*: The one builds, and the other destroys; Submission being a Strengthening and Acknowledging of it.

## PROPOSITION II.

*We are not bound to submit to the Governors, in that Government which we are bound not to submit to.*

BY Submission I understand *active* Submission, and not *passive*, for we may *passively* submit to an *unlawful* Government. *Active Submission* is, when a Man submits to do the preceptive Part of the Law, or to do what the Law requires. *Passive Submission* is, when a Man is content to endure or suffer the Penalty or Punishment contained in the Law, in case of Disobedience. A Man may submit to Banishment or Imprisonment, when he cannot acknowledge the Authority which did thus banish or imprison him. The Reason is, because *passive Obedience* hath involved in its Bosom a Protestation against the Authority, in case his Punishment be for not acknowledging it, or against the Act for which he suffers; and his *passive Obedience* is his Declararion against the Act, seeing he chuses to suffer for not complying with it. In *active Obedience* there's always an Acknowledgment of the Authority; not so in *passive Obedience* always, as the Prelates famous Penman [Mr. Honyman Bishop of Orkney] would make us believe; for there may be *passive Obedience* given to an *Usurper*. (2.) A Man yields *active Obedience*, when he coincides with a Power in these Acts, which only the Members of that imbodyed Power are capable to exercise, and that at their Command; otherways to be thrown out of Office, which is the Penalty in case of not Obedience to that Act, such as juridical Voting, coming to Parliaments, Courts and Conventions of the Lieges; which is proper only to Authority to command, when Obedience is yielded thereunto. This is *active Obedience*; seeing it is Obedience to the preceptive Part of the Law,  
and

and in such Acts Usurpers are not to be obeyed. Hence we may pay Fines, forbear the Exercise of our Affairs; for all this is but *passive Obedience*. And now my Meaning is, That such as are bound not to acknowledge the Government, are not bound actively to obey the Governors. (3.) Governors may be considered two Ways, 1. *Materially* and in the *Concrete*, that is, the *Persons* that are *Governors*. 2. They may be considered *formally*, and as *abstract* from all other Considerations, but only as invested with the *Authority*. The *Governors* may *materially*, or *specifically*, or in the *Concrete*, be obeyed; but not *formally*, when acting in the *Sphere* of their *unlawful Government*. As for Instance, Tho' my Father or Master should turn a *Prelate*, altho' I would not acknowledge him in his *Prelatical Authority*, yet I were not loosed from that *Obedience* I owe to him as my *Parent* or *Master*.

These Things premised, I give these Reasons for it.

*Reas. 1.* Because *Government* and *Governors* are *inseparable*, as *Subject* and *Form*, and therefore the *one*, relatively considered, cannot be *submitted* to without the *other*.

*Reas. 2.* Because all my *Subjection* unto any *Person*, is not because of his *Person*, but because of his *Authority*. If therefore *no Obedience* be due to the *Authority* itself, as *unlawful*, the *Governors*, or *Persons* clothed with that *Authority*, can expect *none*.

*Reas. 3.* Because all *Obedience* or *Disobedience* is manifested towards the *Subject* in whom it is, and in our *Behaviour* to *him*: And hence it is not the *Form* of *Government* that *in recto* is *obeyed* or *disobeyed*, but the *Person* thus *impowered*. 'Tis *Kings* that are really and *in recto* *obeyed*, tho' it be for their *Persons Sake*: And hence, if their *Authority* be *disowned*, their *Persons* cannot be *obeyed*; for, in bowing to him, ye bow to the *Authority* which is engraven on him.



PROPOSITION III.

*When we are bound not to acknowledge the chief Governors, we are bound not to acknowledge inferior Rulers acting under them.*

I understand still as acting under them in that Relation; and this is so clear, that I will not insist upon it. For, if I cannot receive Orders from a *General* in an Army, because of his *Authority* which is *unlawful*, no more can I from an *inferior Officer* acting under him: And the Ground is, All the *inferior Officer's Authority* proceeds from the *Superior's*, and hence hath none but what is communicated to him by his *Superiors*: If therefore the *Superior* hath *no Authority*, no more hath the *Inferior*. 'Tis true indeed, in other Relations we might serve them; as suppose a godly Christian hath, in Time of *Presbytery*, been serving a Master; ere the Term comes his Master runs unto the *Prelate*; the *Servant*, in that Case, tho' he cannot acknowledge his Master as a *Preacher*, yet is he still, during the Time of his Engagement, to serve him in his *municipal Work*.

PROPOSITION IV.

*When we cannot acknowledge the Governors, we cannot acknowledge the Rulers Office-Acts.*

FOR understanding of this, know, (1.) That some Acts are morally good, such as, to love God and our Neighbour; and these Acts, command who will, are to be obeyed. (2.) Distinguish Acts as they proceed from their distinct Relations. If a Christian were *Servant* to the *Prelate*, he might no doubt run his Errands, because this doth not proceed from his *unlawful Authority*, but from *another Relation*. (3.) Some Acts do proceed from the *Prelate* by way of *Desire*; and therefore I called it their *Office-Acts*. Acts of *Desire* might be obeyed,

ed, if in themselves possible or lawful. A Physician might come to the *Prelate*, if he were sick, being by him desired; or, if he were in Trouble of Mind for his Perjury, and did send for a godly Minister for Counsel, in that Case he might be obeyed. So that it is meant of such positive Acts as do proceed from his Authority. And the Reason of this shortly is, because Submission or Obedience cannot be given immediately to the Governors themselves, but unto the Acts; and, by obeying their Acts, we obey them: Which Acts, being official and authoritative, cannot be obeyed, if the Governors themselves, as such, cannot be obeyed. Whosoever, therefore, is bound not to acknowledge any Government or Governor, is bound not to acknowledge the Acts proceeding from these Governors and Government; for, in obeying their Acts, ye acknowledge them.

And now, these Things being particularly cleared and proven, I draw this

*Conclusion.* *The Conformists Preaching being an authoritative Act, whoever are bound to extirpate the Government of Prelacy, as we are, are bound not to acknowledge the Curates Acts of Preaching.*

But against this *Argument* and *Conclusion* some *Objections* are raised, which I shall briefly answer. As,

*Object. I.* *Hearing* is not an Acknowledgment or Submission to Preaching. *I answer,* It is false: For by what other Way can ye manifest your Acknowledgment of Preaching, or submitting to it, but by *Hearing* and *Practising*? This is the Way that ye always did acknowledge it, and the publick Laws of the Kingdom do declare so much; but ye acknowledge it the Ordinance of God, else why go ye to it? And can ye go to it without Superstition? And therefore ye must needs own it; for,

for, if it want Authority, it is no Ordinance of God.

*Object. 2.* But, by not going to *Synods*, nor sitting in their *Sessions*, nor *communicating* with them, I shew that I *acknowledge not* the Government.

I *answer*, Ye shew, indeed, that, in these Acts, ye do not acknowledge the Government, or in so far, *in tanto* : But yet, in going to *hear*, ye acknowledge the Government. Ye *acknowledge* the King's Authority, when ye come to one of his Courts, tho' not to another. And, I pray, look, and ye shall find the same Grounds for *communicating*, as for being one of the *Carate's Hearers*. The same Power that gives him Power to *preach*, authorises and warrants him to *dispense the Sacrament*.

*Object. 3.* Then is it unlawful to hear an *Independent* in *New-England*, seeing *Independency*, to *Presbyterians*, is an *unlawful* Government, upon which Account it was that it was sworn against: Nor, for the same Reason, could an *Independent* hear a *Presbyterian*. Therefore, tho' it were granted, that *Prelacy* were *unlawful*, and that we did well to swear to extirpate it, yet we may *still hear* them, while they *preach*, or any *Officer* under them, notwithstanding of the *Unlawfulness* of the Government.

I *answer*, (1.) 'Tis not only because of a *modal Unlawfulness* in the Government, that we are bound to *extirpate* it, or not to *hear* their Officers, but because that Government is *unlawful* as to the *Substance* thereof, and *Fountain of Power*, and clearly discovered to be of *Satan*, because it hath done *much Evil*, and is an *old Enemy*; and because there are *unlawful Officers* in it, whereby the Government is *substantially* violated. Not so among *Independents*; there are no *unlawful Officers* in *independent* Government; and tho' they say that the Power *radically* is in the *Community of the Faithful*, yet do they acknowledge it *formally* to be in the *Collective Body of the*

*Guides*; and *their Differences and Presbyterians* are but *modal*; and besides, the Lord, by blessing their Ministry, doth declare, by the Conversion of Souls, that he owns them as *lawful Ministers*. And therefore, tho' we may withdraw from them in any Act wherein they swerve from the Rule, yet not in Hearing. Nor is any particular Person in that Capacity to *extirpate Independency*, as we were when we did swear to *extirpate Prelacy*, the whole Body of the Land being therein engaged. And therefore will not our Obligations to *extirpate Prelacy*, by *not hearing*, infer an Obligation for *extirpating*, by *not hearing*, the *Independents*. And truly I could never satisfy myself better, with reference to our Ancestors Behaviour, both in *hearing* and *sitting in Synods with Prelates*, than by considering that *Prelacy* had not risen to such a Degree of Odiousness before, as it hath done of late; nor had discovered such Evils, nor was so solemnly and explicitly sworn against, as it was of late in our *Solemn Covenant*. And therefore, supposing *Independency* to be *unlawful*, (2.) if we were in the same Capacity to *extirpate* it, as we were when we did swear against *Prelacy*, it were our *Duty* likewise. There was never another Government in *New-England* but *Independency*; they never thrust out *Presbytery*, as *Prelates* have done: And hence there should be greater Measure of *Extirpation* against the one, than against the other. And possibly, when we first got out of *Popery*, or before the full Rise of the *Man of Sin*, when few or none did see the Evil thereof, when holy Men were officiating in the Place, and they designing the Lord's Glory, and the Lord blessing their Endeavours and Pains, nor had ever known another amongst them, a private Christian then, having the same Light he now hath, and living amongst them, however he might speak to them, and pray for Restitution of the Government according to the *Pattern of the Mount*;

Mount; I say, that possibly, in such a Case, he might hear their Officers, if they said their continuing their Office did proceed from mere Infirmity.

*Object. 4.* Tho' we be bound to *extirpate Prelacy*, yet we are not bound not to hear the *Conformists*.

*I answer,* (1.) The one is more than the other; and, if we be bound to *extirpate Prelacy*, we are bound to no Act whereby we acknowledge it. (2.) Being sworn against the *Authority*, we are sworn against all *Acts* of the *Authority*. (3.) All the Capacity in which private Christians can act, as to *Extirpating*, is not Obedience; and they being sworn in their Stations as well as the Rulers and Ministers, hence, as they are bound not to preach under them, so are private Christians bound not to obey, nor to shew their Submission any Way by which they formerly shewed it to *Presbyterians*: For *Prelates* seek no more of private Christians, for establishing their Power, but *Hearing*: And, seeing your Capacity suffers you not to give any other Testimony against it, than not Submission, express your *Extirpation* by not *Hearing*, which alone is competent for your Station.

*Object. 5.* We were bound to *extirpate Prelacy* with others; and hence they, with whom we were bound formerly, leaving us, and being alone, there lieth no Engagement upon us; but, being loosed by the supreme Authority, are free. *I answer,* That binding ourselves to the *Extirpating* of all *Superstition*, and of *Prelacy*, as to a *moral Duty*, and that to the great God, tho' conjunctly with others, their Deserting of us cannot loose us; nor any Power but he to whom ye are bound, that is, the *great God*. Tho' a Man be bound for a Sum, with others, to a certain Person, if his conjunct Debtors turn bankrupt, or refuse to pay, this prejudices not the Creditor's Right to pursue and call for his Money

Money at the Hands of that Man. Our Nobles and Rulers were not the principal Parties to which we were bound; for, if they had been, they might have loosed us: But now they sit upon another's Right, who is not subject to them, but above them.

*Object. 6.* If it be *Breach of Covenant* to hear the *Curates*, then it will follow, that all the *Godly*, who do hear them, are *perjured*, which is a great Sin, and therefore to be separate from, upon the Account of continuing in a scandalous Sin, as well as *Curates*. I answer, Fain would I free the Lord's People, if I could. But this I shall say, Tho' the Argument prove, that they have not observed the *Covenant* in all Points, yet they cannot be called *perjured* in a strict Sense, as it is usually taken; for there is none, yea, never was there any mere Man, but did in some Degrees break his Covenants made with God, and so might be called a *perjured Man*; for all of us have sinned, and broken *Covenant* some Way, omitting Duties many Times to which we were engaged, even as to the *Matter*, and coming short as to the *Manner*. Till Men violate the *Covenant* in *substantial* Articles thereof, *knowingly* and *obstinately*, they are not to be reckoned *perjured*. And the Matter of Hearing not yet being fully cleared, cannot come in that Roll, but is to be interpreted a Breach of Infirmity, when it doth proceed from a Want of Light. And the God of all Compassion knows how to pity the Ignorant, that hear in the Simplicity of their Hearts, and know not that it is a Sin. But Ministers that have conformed, have avowedly and manifestly broken *Covenant*; for they talk against the *Lawfulness* of it, and so have acted quite contrary to that which it manifestly imported. But the best and surest Way to wipe away the *Aspersion*, were to repent, and reform, and withdraw. But now their

their Sin being a Sin of Infirmity, there is no such Ground of withdrawing from the *Godly*, as from the *Conformists*.

*Object. 7. last.* We are not in the same Capacity that we were, when we did swear the Covenant; we might better *extirpate* them then than now; and therefore we are not now bound, as we were then. *Ans.* True, ye cannot *extirpate* them by all Manner of Ways so conveniently now, as ye might have done then: But yet we are bound to *extirpate* them in the Way and by the Means that are left us; and so are bound never to acknowledge them, nor erect them; and, if others set them up, never to submit to them. This *Oath* is a *perpetual Oath*, *binding* evermore. Ye are not in a Capacity to fight now as ye were then, not having the same Opportunity, but ye should cast in the Mite ye have, *viz.* your *Non-Submission* that is left you; if ye cannot *extirpate*, yet *strengthen not*.

To conclude then, join this Argument with other Arguments going before, and let them be weighed, and see if this make not up a strong Argument. Say, *Eli's Sons*, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were to be heard and owned; yet were not these sworn against by Authority. Say, that many were converted under *Prelacy*, and did hear their Officers; yet now the Case is altered. If the *Government* were *comortable*, yet their *visible Wickedness* stumbles Men; and tho' we could come over this, yet their discovered illegal Authority, sworn against, like the Sword of *Elisha*, is ready to slay, and meet what had escaped *Hazael*. *Call not* therefore to any of the former *Saints*, for in this they cannot answer us. And therefore, in Honour of our *Covenant*, and Respect to that sacred *Oath*, let us seek the bearing down of *Prelacy*, by bringing our Necks from under that Yoke, and no more strengthen them. Seriously consider the Words of the Lord, while he saith, (*Jer. x. 21.*) *The Pastors* are

are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord: Therefore they shall not prosper, and all their Flocks shall be scattered.

## C H A P. IV.

*Wherein various Arguments, advanced by the Curates and their Abettors, in favours of hearing them, are considered and answered.*

### S E C T. I.

*Wherein the Conformists Argument for Hearing, drawn from Matth. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. is refuted.*

**I** Begin with this, because it is the great Argument which is pled for Hearing. The Words are, *Then spake Jesus to the Multitude, and his Disciples, saying: The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses Seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do: But do not ye after their Works; for they say, and do not.* And hence they argue, if Scribes and Pharisees, who were so absurd and gross, were to be heard, then ought we to hear Curates. But they were to be heard; *ergo*, &c. The Minor is proven from that Command, *Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* The Connexion of the first Proposition would seem undeniable.

In answering this Argument, and its Proof, I shall consider four Things. (1.) I shall speak something to the Place cited in the gross, or in general. (2.) I shall consider the Connexion of the first Proposition. (3.) I shall consider the Assumption. (4.) I shall consider the Proof of it.

I. For the first, with Reverence to the Judgment of others, I think it is altogether misapplied; for I do not think that Christ speaks in that Place of the Scribes and Pharisees, as they were Church Men, or ecclesi-



ecclesiastick Persons, but as they were *Judges* and *Interpreters of the civil Law*; so as the Sense were thus, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's Seat*, that is, judge in civil Affairs and Matters, succeeding *Moses* in that, who was likewise a *Judge* and *King in Jeshurun*, and from whom they had their judicial Laws; and therefore, being constitute Judges, are to be obeyed because of their Authority. *But do not ye after their Works: For they say and do not*; that is, as the after Words explain it, *bind heavy Burdens*, as Taxes, Oppressions, and rigorous Sentences of Law, which, as civil Judges, were most proper for them to do; but are not helpful to others to bear them through, that is, do not move with the little Finger; an ordinary Fault in oppressing Rulers. And if this be the Sense, as the following Considerations lead me to believe, then is all the Strength of this Argument broken. And that this is to be interpreted of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, as acting in a *civil Capacity*, I am induced to believe.

1. In regard Christ having said little or nothing concerning that Obedience that is due to the *civil Judges*, it was most fit that he should speak something to it here: And therefore saith, that Subjection is due to them, notwithstanding of all their Wickedness, which he afterwards mentions; which, if the Lord had not guarded against, might have been a Temptation to them to scruple Obedience, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 18. *Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King, as Supreme; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the Punishment of Evil-Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.* ——— *Servants, be subject to your Masters with all Fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward.*

2. Because comparing this Place with Luke xi. 46. it would seem the *Scribes and Pharisees*, who did *bind heavy Burdens*, were distinct, as to their Office, from those

those *Pharisees*, who made such a *Profession* of *Holiness*, that made *Profelytes*, and that loved the uppermost Seats in the *Synagogues*: For, after Christ had taxed these for their *Hypocrisy*, a *Lawyer* started up, and finding these *Faults* taxed to be in their *Order* too, said unto him, *Thou* not only *reproachest Scribes and Pharisees*, but, it would seem *us* who are *Lawyers* too. Upon which Christ did tell them their *Faults*; and said that they were hypocritical, made *Profession* of *Justice*, and yet did but load Men with their *Sentences* and *Burdens*, made the *Law* a *Tyranny*, and did contribute nothing to the *Ease* of the *People*. *Wo* unto you *Lawyers* also. And it seems this *Lawyer* proposed it as a *Doubt*, hoping possibly Christ would not pass such a *Sentence* against them, as against other *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. And therefore the *Lord* answers, as tho' he had not spoken so clearly of the *Lawyers*, and saith, *Wo* to you also.

3. Because of the *Inference* that is brought, *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do*. For, if this *Argument* held good, then we should give an *implicit Obedience* unto all their *Commands*, and that because they are in *Authority*. There is a stronger *Ground* for pressing religious *Obedience* than the *Authority* of *Men*, even the *Will* of *God*: And it is inconceivable to think, that Christ should have pressed *universal* and *unrestricted* *Obedience*, in *moral Duties*, to such as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were so *grossly heterodox* and *erroneous* both in their *Doctrine* and *Manners*. This were indeed to lead the *People* into a *Snare*. And therefore I remember the *Papists* build their *unlimited* and *implicit Obedience* to the *Authority* of the *Church*, upon this very *Place*, which truly, to me, taking the *Place* in the *Sense* commonly given, would seem plainly to speak as much, and which could not be well contradicted, without manifest *Wresting*. And I think ye shall hardly get a *Parallel* in all *Scripture*, where *universal Obedience*

to whatsoever they bid you do to *spiritual Officers*, is commanded, merely upon the Account of their actual Instalment in their *Authority*. But now it will follow very well, restricting the Words to these *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in their civil Capacity; for it is most sound to say, *In every Thing that is purely civil obey your Superiors*, because of their Authority; for, as their Laws are civil, they have their Authority *mainly* from the Authority that enacts them, and upon that Account, *principally*, are they to be obeyed, because it is one Authority that enacts and executes; not so in *Spirituals*, which have their Authority from God, and are not to be obeyed because of any under Authority. And the Sense thus given is most consonant to that Place, *1 Pet. ii. 13. Submit to every Ordinance of Man.*

4. Because their binding of heavy Burdens, which those that did sit in *Moses's* Chair were said to do, is most applicable to *civil Officers*; because these Words cannot be said of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in their *ecclesiastick* Capacity: For, by these *heavy Burdens* ye must mean the *ceremonial Law*, which, *Acts xv. 10.* is called, *a Yoke which could not be born*. But then it is false to say, that they did not move in bearing them with their little Finger; for they were most zealous, in not only pressing, but in performing them, being exceedingly *superstitious*, as is clear from *Matth. xv. 1—9.* or, by these *Burdens* ye must mean their *legal* and strict Pressing of the *moral Law*, in the Performance of which they were defective. I grant indeed they were defective in the Performance of that. But then it is hard to say, that the *Commands* of God's moral Law were a heavy Burden, and grievous to be born, seeing *his Commandments are not grievous*, *Matth. xi. 29.* *1 John v. 3.* and which were *a Delight to the Saints* in old Times, *Psalms xl. 8.* And because it might be replied, that it was grievous in the Way and Sense they imposed upon it, and

that the Law, without the Gospel, was indeed to Flesh and Blood grievous; but then consider, that as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did expound the Law, applying all to the outward Letter, it was no grievous Burden to be born, but a Thing which might easily be got done. They made the Law (as is clear from *Matth. v. per totum*) a very slight and easy Matter, and the Obedience due thereunto but little Burden. And therefore it seems this could not be said of them, as they did expound either the *moral* or *ceremonial Law*, but as they did expound and execute the *judicial Law*, to whose Commands, in respect they were the Dispensers of it for the Time, Obedience was to be given, and mostly upon the Account of their Authority; as Obedience to moral Commands and divine Ordinances is mostly to be given for the Lord's Sake, not Mens, who are only but Declarers and Executors of that Law.

5. It is said to be *Moses's* Seat, and not *Aaron's*. *Aaron* was the only *ecclesiastick* Officer, and not a *civil* Officer, and those who were only *Church-Officers*, should rather be judged to succeed him, than *Moses*. But,

6. And which most weighs with me, I shall prove, that it was utterly unlawful to hear the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, as they were *Church-Men*. Which is the Conclusion that is alledged to be inferred from this Text and Proposition, their sitting in *Moses's* Chair. I shall loose these *Objections* afterwards \*.

I come

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\*As the Words of our Lord, in *Matth. xxiii. 1, 2, 3.* have been formerly by the Prelates, and People of the Episcopalian Sect, and of late by Mr. Currie, and others, improven for countenancing corrupt Churches and Ministers, tho' guilty of gross Backslidings, and persisting obstinately and wilfully in a Course of Defection from

I come now to consider the Connexion of the first Proposition, If *Scribes* and *Pharisees* should be *heard*, therefore should the *Curates*; and much more seeing they are not *erroneous* in their *Doctrine*, and seeing they sit in *Moses's* Seat, as well as they. To this I answer, by denying the Connexion, and that for these *Grounds* following.

1. Because Obedience is only given them, not as to *ecclesiastick* Matters, but as to *civil* Matters, and as they were *civil Judges* of Law. And therefore *Curates* not being *civil Judges* in the Law, they are not to be obeyed: For, to argue from Obedience to civil Persons, to pretended *ecclesiastick* Persons, is no strong Consequence. But,

2. Tho' this were not, and tho' it should be granted, that Christ speaks to them as they were Church-Officers, yet the Consequence will not hold; because it is clear from Scripture, especially *John*  
1. 19,

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*from the Cause and Testimony of Jusus, notwithstanding proper Means of reclaiming have been used; so our Author has solidly and judiciously detected the Pallacy and Weakness of the Argument deduced therefrom; and proven that the Scribes and Pharisees are there to be considered as civil Officers and Rulers, who explained the judicial Law, and to whose lawful Commands Obedience was due; and not as ecclesiastical Officers. And, to shew that he was not singular in his Opinion, in applying the Words of our Lord to civil Rulers, it is thought proper to add here what the late reverend and worthy Mr. James Hog, Minister of the Gospel at Carnock, has said there-upon in his Letters anent Separation, Pag. 35, 36. printed anno 1717. "I doubt not, says he, but that "the Scribes and Pharisees were Teachers, and, as "such, I firmly believe they were not to be heard, be- "cause they were Hereticks, and for other weighty  
" Res-*

i. 19, 24. that some of the *Pharisees* were Persons in a lawful Office, instituted by the Lord himself for teaching of the People : For it is said there, they were *Levites* ; which Office was appointed of God to teach the People : But not so the *Prelate*, who is an *unlawful* Officer ; and therefore there's more Ground for not *hearing Prelates* and *Curates*, who are in Subordination to that *Antichristian Hierarchy*, which is an *unlawful, usurped* and *sworn* against *Authority*, than for not *hearing Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who preached or officiated by a *lawful* Authority.

3. The *Consequence* is not good ; because the Government of the Church, and corrupted Pastors or Officers,

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“ *Reasons before-mentioned. The Command is very*  
 “ *express, Prov. xix. 27. Cease, my Son, to hear*  
 “ *the Instruction that causes to err from the Words*  
 “ *of Knowledge. Notwithstanding these Scribes and*  
 “ *Pharisees were also Rulers, and Members of the*  
 “ *great Jewish Council, and, in this Sense, were con-*  
 “ *sidered in a legislative Capacity. This is that Ca-*  
 “ *capacity wherein I think they are said (by our Lord Je-*  
 “ *sus) to sit in Moses's Seat ; for whatever other Dig-*  
 “ *nities Moses was invested with, he is mainly confi-*  
 “ *dered and held forth in Scripture as a Lawgiver,*  
 “ *John i. 17. The Law was given by Moses ; and*  
 “ *on this Account it is, I would judge, and do render it,*  
 “ *with all due Respect to great Divines otherways*  
 “ *minded, that the sitting in Moses's Seat appeareth*  
 “ *to imply Authority and Power, at least executive*  
 “ *of these Laws which the Lord gave by Moses. This*  
 “ *Exposition, tho' not ordinary, yet seems native,*  
 “ *plain and easy, and taketh off all Grounds of Exception*  
 “ *I know ; seeing we have no Cause to doubt but that*  
 “ *Obedience was at that Time due to the Jewish San-*  
 “ *hedrim, in so far as they enjoined nothing but that*  
 “ *which the Lord had before commande'd by Moses.’’*

Officers, were settled in Christ's Time, and the Lord Jesus was *in foro petitorio*. A backslidden Church, recovering and rising out of their Puddle, is to be distinguished from a Church backsliding and going to fall. Christ met with *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in the Chair, and the several Abuses had quietly crept in ere he came, and his Care was to help Things first by the Ministry of his Harbinger *John*; then by his own; and all Things were to be tried gently, and many Things in Prudence to be born with and tolerated; and therefore not to be separated from at first, *2 Tim. ii. 24, 25*. Which was the last Remedy, Christ reserving that till after his Resurrection, *Acts xix. 9*. *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake Evil of that Way before the Multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples.* But the Case is otherways with us. We were in Possession of *Presbytery*, and *Prelacy* hath come in upon us, and they as yet but settling and establishing themselves, to the Compleating of which they want nothing but the People's universal Acknowledging as to Hearing; and therefore it behoves us to hold fast what we have, and to stand to our Liberties, and keep, by all Means, *Prelacy* from establishing. The Day of Patience was not worn out with the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; for many of them afterwards repented: Not so with the *Prelates*, who are an old Adversary, and maintain an old Quarrel already debated: And there are no more hopeful Means left to recover them, they barring, by a Law, all Endeavours of Compassion to that Effect: And therefore there is more Reason for Separation now, than then. But, put the Case, that the Government of *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and themselves, had been annulled, and put out of the Church by Christ, as it was after his Ascension, and that, by his Command, his Apostles and Disciples had succeeded, and established another Form of Policy according to his Word; and that, at the Com-

mand

mand of Christ, the Apostles and all Christians had sworn utterly to *extirpate* the *Government of Scribes and Pharisees*: And suppose, that, after all this, these *abjured Pharisees*, being backed with *Cesar's Authority*, and having their Offices from him, should violently *thrust out* the Apostles, and other Officers, who were established by Christ, that would not submit to them, and take their Places and preach, Should they be heard or countenanced, especially considering the *Abominableness* of their Lives, and that their *Course and Government* did tend to the utter *Subversion* of Christ's Kingdom? Truly the Case is so with us. And what wise Man looks not on the *Establishment of Prelacy*, as the *Foundation of Babel* amongst us, and the *first Step to Popery*?

4. The *Scribes and Pharisees* were more innocent than the *Prelates*; for they sat not in *Moses's Chair* till he was dead. We find they put out none: But *Prelates* stay not till the Death of those who were in the *Chair*; but, putting them out, have settled themselves in their Places. It would have been hard to have commanded to *hear Scribes and Pharisees*, if they had thrust out *Moses*, and sat in his *Chair*, if he had been alive. I shall omit the *Disproportion* betwixt *Scribes and Pharisees* and the *Curates*, in their *outward visible Conversations*. There were no *Drunkards* and *Swearers* amongst them; they had a *Form* of, and made *Pretences* unto *Piety*, and prayed frequently, at least. But the *Curates* come behind, in that they profess nothing; and their *Hatred* to the *Saints* is so great, that they have fallen out with *Christ, Heaven and Holiness* for their Sakes, like him who said, *That, if Puritans went to Heaven, he would not go there*. But the real *Mystery* is, they hate *Christ* and the *Father*; and therefore they love not, but hate his *Saints*, as *Christ* saith, *John xv. 21. All these Things will they do unto you for my Name's Sake, because they know not him*  
that



that sent me. So that by this ye may consider the Strength of the first Proposition. But,

III. Let us come to the Assumption, which is this. But Scribes and Pharisees were to be heard. I answer, by denying it simply; and I shall answer the Proof of it in its own Place. And I give these Grounds why they should not be heard.

I. Let it be seriously considered, that these Phari-sees did preach fundamental Errors, and such as the Belief of them could not consist with Salvation at that Time; and we ought not to hear such, Prov. xix. 27. Cease, my Son, to hear the Instruction that causeth to err from the Words of Knowledge. Now, that they were most impure in their Doctrine, yea, and taught fundamental Errors, is clear: For they taught Christ was a Deceiver, a Contradictor of Moses; that he had a Devil, and that he was not the Messias; they perverted the whole Meaning of the moral Law, so as any was made capable enough to perform it; they were most superstitious in their Worship, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. And therefore it is said, In vain do ye worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, as all Scripture makes evident, Matth. v. per totum. Matth. xv. 3—12. and Chap. xvi. 1—13. Now, that all these were fundamental Errors, I prove thus. Because the Belief and Holding of them could not consist with Salvation, as is clear from Christ's own Mouth; If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins, John. viii. 24. And therefore, when the Scribes and Pharisees preached, they were but Thieves and blind Guides, that would draw the Blind into the Ditch, and that would make their Profelytes seven Times more Children of the Devil than before. I desire any rational Man in God's Fear to consider, whether ever Christ would command the staggering Multitude, uncertain what to do, or whom to believe, in respect of the Diversities of Judgments and Opinions at that Time, to hear such Soul-destroy-

*ing Guides, Wolves, Thieves and Robbers?* We ought to *abstain from all Appearance of Evil*, And therefore, the Multitude should *beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees*, which was the Occasion and Mean to lead them into the Ditch. Cast not yourself against the Snare. Ye will say, they erred only in the Misapplication of a fundamental Truth, for they still acknowledged that there should come a *Messias*, but only denied Christ to be him; and that Position, *The Son of Mary is the Messiah*, was not absolutely necessary to be believed. But this is to give Christ the flat Lie, who said plainly, not only unless ye believe that there is a *Messiah*, but unless *ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins*. And so, tho' their Error was but in *Application*, it was such an *Error* that *damm'd*, and therefore was *fundamental*. And therefore, as we should not hear *gross obstinate Hereticks*, lest we be *perverted* by them, no more should we hear *Scribes and Pharisees*. And what a dangerous Doctrine was their denying the Spirituality of the moral Law, and their Traditions, and other Lies they made, *Matth. xviii. 16—34?*

2. I desire it may be pondered, if Persons sinning against the Holy Ghost, and making a Law, that *every one that should acknowledge Christ should be thrust out of their Synagogues*, and so declared incapable of Mercy, and out of the Reach of the visible Covenant, being made for ever incapable of the Benefits thereof; whether, I say, such should be acknowledged as Officers in Christ's House.

3. It is clear to me by the Command of Christ, *Matth. xv. 14. Let them alone*, and the Reason is, *they be blind Leaders of the Blind. And, if the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch*. So then Christ would have them let alone, and none to come near them. For they are but blind Guides; they may and will mislead you, and therefore be not directed by them; their Doctrine makes their *Profelyte seven Times a Child of the Devil more than he was before*. And therefore

Sect. 1. *from corrupt Ministers vindicated.* 177  
therefore shun *Hearing* of them as the Means to *pro-*  
*selyte* you.

4. It is contrary to the Practice allowed of Saints. Our Lord, in *John* x. 8. speaking of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were but *Hirelings*, calls them *Thieves* and *Robbers*, *All that ever came before me, are Thieves and Robbers: But the Sheep did not hear them.* Nor did I ever hear any Thing worth the answering that was said to this; some going so far, being forced thereunto from their *Exposition* of this Place, that they say, *Hereticks*, and *Preachers* of fundamental Errors, may be heard, so that their Errors be shunned. But this gross *Untruth* and dangerous *Doctrine* is so palpably contrary to the *Scriptures*, that it does not deserve a *Refutation*. Shall *Ministers* turning *Arians*, *Papists* and *Quakers*, poisoning the *Souls* of People with Errors, be heard? Shall we shun an *Evil*, and not shun *Temptations* thereto, and *Appearances* thereof? Shall we take *Fire* in our *Bosom*, and then beware it don't burn us? Shall we put a giddy *Multitude* on a damnable *Snare*, and then bid them look to their *Feet*? Away with such *Stupidity*. Or, *secondly*, the *Minor* may be distinguished; The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* should be owned in their *civil Capacities*: True. But that they should be owned in their *ecclesiastick Capacities*: False †.

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IV. To

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† Our Author's Reasonings upon this Subject appear very strong and cogent; and, in order to cast farther Light hereupon, 'tis judged fit to subjoin what the foresaid Mr. Hog, Minister at Carnock, has said to this Purpose, in his *Casuistical Essay* on the Lord's Prayer, P. 71, 72. where he says, " I sincerely judge, that our Lord Jesus did not command or allow to hear the Pharasaical Teachers of that Period, nor such as they  
" were

IV. To consider the Proof of the *Minor*, which is, *Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.*

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“ were in any Age; for, when I seriously ponder, (as  
 “ before the Lord) how clearly and pointedly their gross  
 “ Ignorance, and Perversions of the great Fundamen-  
 “ tals, both of Law and Gospel, are decyphered in the  
 “ Word, their bitter and implacable Hatred, and vio-  
 “ lent Pursuing of the Messias, whom they persecuted  
 “ to the utmost, even against their own Consciences,  
 “ (whercin at least several of them committed the un-  
 “ pardonable Sin) together with the Pains (may I so  
 “ express it) which our Lord had taken on all Occasi-  
 “ ons to detect them unto the People, with the many  
 “ Cautions he gives to beware of them, and to take  
 “ heed lest they should be infected with the poison-  
 “ ous Leaven of their Doctrine, and hypocritical  
 “ Pageantry; and add to this the Woes he pronounceth  
 “ against them, in the Course of his Doctrine, almost at  
 “ every Turn, and the whole Clusters which at once he  
 “ heapeth on them, and, more to this Purpose, which  
 “ the Gospel-History representeth, I cannot recon-  
 “ cile these so strong and pathological Dissuasives with  
 “ an Allowance to countenance the Administrations  
 “ of such of them who taught publickly, especially for  
 “ that we are expressly prohibited to hear the Instructi-  
 “ on that causeth to err from the Words of Know-  
 “ ledge; and the poisonous Plague of heretical Doc-  
 “ trines and Teachers is still to be evited, chiefly  
 “ when the whole Mass is corrupt, and scarce any  
 “ Thing left entire, (as in the present Case) and that  
 “ it is both required of Christ’s Sheep, and com-  
 “ mended as a Property peculiar to them, from a  
 “ supernatural and saving Instinct, to put Difference  
 “ betwixt Christ’s Voice, and the Voice of a Stran-  
 “ ger; as also, not to follow, but to flee from these  
 “ Strangers.”

do. To which I answer, That here there is not one Word of *Hearing*: There is indeed Obedience to the Law of *Moses* commanded, but no *Hearing*; tho' many, never looking, and, I fear, never pondering the Place, have, in their Writings, so given it to us. And so the most that this would prove, tho' granted that they were ecclesiastick Persons, and that in that Capacity they were spoken of there, is, because the *Pharisees* did preach *Moses's* Doctrine, tho' themselves were wicked; yet the Duties they taught, being grounded on *Moses's* Law, did continue still to be Duty, notwithstanding they were pressed by Authority of such wicked Persons; and lest some should think their Duties to be no longer Duties, because commanded by them: Yet, saith the Lord, for all that I am to say against them, and all the Disgust this may give you of them, cast not off their Doctrine in as far as it agrees with *Moses*: So that the direct End of this Command is not *Hearing*, but Obedience to their Doctrine; and, seeing the *Curates* command Faith and Repentance out of the Gospel, they are to be obeyed; do what they bid you. And this Doctrine of the *Pharisees* might be known either by their Writings, Discourse or Sermons, which they heard, ere Christ came and told them of their Heresies: Even as I know that some of the *Curates* preach sound Doctrine, tho' I don't hear them: But, stretch it to the utmost, the most, as the learned *Voetius* thinks, this will prove, is, That Christ but supposeth the Multitude heard; but doth neither commend or allow them in it; only tells the Use they should make of what they hear, or of the *Pharisees* Doctrine out of the Law of *Moses*, what Way soever they came by the Knowledge of it: For these Church-Officers were heard, ere Christ came, and discovered their Erroneousness, and then the Sheep did not hear them, *John* x. 8. And by what they heard then, they might know the *Pharisees* Doctrine.

Doctrinē. The illative Particle [*therefore*] doth not so much denote a *causal Illation*, as it doth a *naked Connexion*: From such a Proposition, *They sit in Moses's Chair*, and thus being so, would Christ say, *Hear ye them?* Or, if it be a *causal Connexion*, it is inferred rather from *Moses's Chair*, as it imports his *Doctrinē* they *preach*, rather than their *Authority*. *They sit in Moses's Chair*, that is, *preach Moses's Doctrinē*: Therefore, and because this Doctrinē is good, *signum pro re signata*, it should be heard. But, *secondly*, I distinguish the Proposition, *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do*, in all *civil Things*, true; but, in *ecclesiastick Things*, I deny. And it only proves, that, in *ecclesiastick Matters*, they should not be obeyed, but in *civil*; which being indeed the *Scope of the Place*, and to which I adhere, doth infer nothing for *Hearing of the Curates*; for ye might as well argue, we are subject to the *King's Laws*, therefore hear *Curates*.

*Object. 1.* It may be said, That this Exposition is not ordinary, but contradicted by *Interpreters*. I answer, I grant it; but *Interpreters* do but suppose it, but don't prove it; and they are not infallible in their *Interpretations*. And I never dissented, but I did shew my *Reasons*, and let them be considered.

*Object. 2.* The *Pharisees* were *ecclesiastick Persons*, and so were *Scribes*, and they preached and made *Profelytes*; therefore they were not *civil Officers*, nor could they be. I answer, Some of them were, I grant; but it follows not but they might be *civil Men* too; for I look upon them as a *Kind of Erastians*; and it is clear from *Scripture*, their *Judging, Sentencing, causing Beating, and sending Officers and Guards*, that they had a *great Stroke in civil Affairs*; and *Historians*, acquainted with *Jewish Affairs*, tell the same. See *Josephus de bello Judaico*. And hence they paid *Tithes* of all they had, and boasted. Now the *Levites* paid only the *Tithe of the Tithes*. As  
for

for the *Pharisees*, they were not *Levites* only, but a Sort of Sect to whom some adhered out of all Tribes, and they who followed their Way, were called *Pharisees*, whether they were *Levites* or not. And so *Paul*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, was a *Pharisee*; which Tribe was incapable to exercise in Church-Matters, as to authoritative-ordinary publick Teaching; this being given only to the *Levites*; and hence these might be *civil Officers*, who ruled the People by their own Laws. Some of them, I think, were *civil Officers* only, some of them had a Meddling in both; and hence Christ taxes their Faults in both in this Chapter; as *Ver. 16—24.* he taxes their Doctrine, and again he taxes their Administration of Justice in the 4th *Verse*, and in *Verse 23.* And as for the *Scribes*, they might be and were *civil Persons* too, at least some of them,

## S E C T. II.

Wherein the Argument, from *Philip. i. 15, 16, 17, 18.* is examined and refuted.

THE Words are, *Some indeed preach Christ even of Envy and Strife, and some also of good Will. The one preach Christ of Contention, not sincerely, supposing to add Affliction to my Bonds: But the other of Love, knowing that I am set for the Defence of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every Way, whether in Pretence, or in Truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* And hence they argue, that, seeing those who preached Christ out of Envy might be heard, which they prove from *Paul's* Rejoicing, that therefore the *Cu-rates* now may be heard likewise,

In examining and enervating the Force of this Argument, I shall consider a double Consequence inferred therefrom. (I.) One is from *Paul's* Rejoicing that Christ was preached, to argue, that therefore such should be heard, who preached him out of En-

vy. (2.) That because those, mentioned there, were and should be heard, that therefore the *Curates* should be heard.

I. I begin with the *First*. *Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, whether out of Envy or Truth*: Therefore those who preached Christ out of Envy might be heard. I deny this Consequence; for then this should be a good Consequence, *Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, whether out of Truth or Envy*: Therefore we may *preach out of Envy*. The one will follow as strongly as the other. The Disciples came home rejoicing that the Devils confessed Christ: Were therefore the *Devils to be heard*? A Christian may rejoice that Christ is honoured, whether by Devils or others. And the Ground is, because it was not in that Action in itself that *Paul* rejoiced, but because that Action, however in itself Matter of Grief, (because such as did go about it were unholy) yet did signify a good Thing; which Thing signified was Matter of Rejoicing, and which Thing was, that Christ was acknowledged by good and bad, whereof the Devil's Instruments preaching him was a Token. *Paul rejoiced in his Infirmities*, 2 Cor. xii. 10. not that the Infirmities were good in themselves, or to be chosen, but because of an accidental Good flowing therefrom, viz. that thereby the Power of Christ should rest upon him. Likewise, *Paul rejoiced that the Romans were Servants of Sin*; Should we therefore countenance them in these Acts of Sin? *Rom. vi. 17*. 'Tis great Joy that the Lord is yet outwardly honoured by his Enemies; and I am in Part, and in some Respect glad, that *Prelates* and *Curates* do yield outward Obedience to Christ, tho' I think it unlawful to hear them. When a Man sees Thistles grow out of his Land, he is glad of it; and so, when Physick mak-s him sick: Tho' the growing of Thistles be not good in itself, yet it is a Token of good fat Land; and therefore, in respect of the Thing



Thing signified, the Sign of it (tho' in itself evil) is Matter of Joy. *Paul* did not look here to the Action itself, which in some respect was Matter of Grief, viz. that such unclean Persons should carry the Name of the Lord, but at the Thing signified, viz. *Christ* universally honoured. But,

2. This Consequence is not good, because, by the Rule of Contraries, if *Paul* rejoiced that *Christ* was preached, whether in Truth or out of Envy, and, if this was a Ground of hearing them, then, because *Paul* might, and no question did mourn, that such Hypocrites did declare the Gospel, who were Enemies to the Cross, Philip. iii. 18. I say, his Mourning should be a Ground of not hearing them; for, if Hearing will follow from *Paul's* Rejoicing that *Christ* was preached, then I see no Reason but *Paul's* Sorrow, in that same Case, which might, and no question did arise from the Ground foresaid, should be a Ground of not hearing; and so we should hear them and not hear them, which is a Contradiction. For, if one Thing be denied from its Extreme, the contrary thereof will be deduced from its contrary Extreme; for, if Laughter be a Sign of Joy, then Weeping, which is its contrary, should be a Sign of Sorrow. And so, if Hearing follow from *Paul's* Joy, then Not-hearing will follow from his Sorrow, which did arise from another Consideration of the same Thing; for, as the one builds, the other, by logical Consequence, destroys. The Truth is, neither from *Paul's* Joy or Sorrow could Hearing or Not-hearing be gathered. We may rejoice in a Thing not good in itself, because of some accidental Good flowing therefrom; in which we mentally (abstracting from that evil Thing) may rejoice, but we cannot countenance it; seeing we cannot prescind in our outward Countenancing, but must be interpreted to own the Thing. But,

II. Suppose these here mentioned, who preached Christ out of Envy, were to be heard, and, I think, were heard, (for they did not preach to the Walls) yet it will not follow that our *Curates* should be heard; and that upon a double Account. (1.) They were Officers officiating by a lawful Authority; not so the *Curates*; which doth sound a vast Difference. (2.) These mentioned here were not *scandalous*, or did not break out in open Acts of *Profaneness*, as *Curates* do. *Paul* could not prove *Perjury* against them, or *Drunkenness*; only they fomented a private Grudge, which *Paul* by secret Signs might know. And 'tis hard to prove them scandalous: The Scripture only speaks of the End and Principle of their Actions, which are *Strife*, and *Envy*, and *Contention*, which are not visibly discerned; and hence 'tis said they *preach not sincerely*, which is not open Sin: And, if they were scandalous, why doth not *Paul* shew so much, and warn the *Philippians* to cause cut them off? And, if such were not scandalous, 'tis nothing to our Case; profane Men might have sought another Trade of Life, than professed, much less preached, Christ in these Times, when it was a Crime to be a Christian; it would have been too hot for them; but they carried their Business. And therefore, tho' those who preach Christ out of Envy and Strife, who yet were not scandalous (as many in our late Times did) tho' these were to be heard, yet not those who preach him out of Envy, and are likewise scandalous, as our *Curates* are. The Reasons are obvious, and I have given them before. And (3.) since *Paul* meant not of any particular Person, but grounding on a common Maxim, *That of all Trades there are good and bad*, hence concluded, that some preached not Christ sincerely, but, as in other Trades, so among Preachers there were *Knaves* too. So that this Argument proves nothing.

S E C T. III.

Wherein the Argument, taken from 1 Sam. ii. 12, &c. is considered and answered.

THIS Argument runs thus: If the People of God did not separate from *Eli's Sons*, who were *most notoriously wicked*, but still *sacrificed* by them; then should not any *Wickedness* in the *Curates* make us *withdraw* from the *Ordinances* of God, such as *Preaching* is.

For Answer to this I would have these Things following considered.

1. It was a *Sin* to *Eli's Sons* to offer *Sacrifice*, and were by the *Law* incapacitated to do so, because of their *typical Uncleaness*, which they contracted by *lying with the Women at the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, 1 Sam. ii. 22. and therefore, being in their *Uncleaness*, ought to be *separate from the Sanctuary*, Lev. xv. 16. *If any Man's Seed of Copulation go out from him, then he shall—be unclean;* which (Lev. xxii. 4.) is applicable to the *Priests*. And ye know, that an outward visible *Uncleaness*, such as that was, did incapacitate to approach unto, or touch the holy Things of God, *Ver. 2, 3.* of the same *Chapter*.

2. The People therefore were thus involved in *Sin*, in giving their *Sacrifices* to *Eli's Sons*, for these Things were defiled by reason of the *typical Uncleaness* of the *Sons of Eli*, Hag. ii. 12, 13. therefore, as the People should not pollute the *Offerings*, so they should not have given them to be polluted, but given them to other *Priests*.

3. Whereas it is said, that the People sinned in *abhorring the Offering of the Lord*, it is not meant that they did not come to offer *Sacrifice*, for the contrary was true, *Ver. 13.* but this *Abhorring* was an inward *Act*, in thinking meanly of, and despising the true *Ordinances* of God, as *Ver. 17.* shews, compared

with *Mal. ii. 8.* which was occasioned by the Sons of *Eli* their Loofeness.

4. The Consequence of this Argument is very bad, in respect *Eli's* Sons were of the Tribe of *Levi*, and of *Aaron's* Sons, which did capacitate them *mainly* to minister in the Priest's Office, and were Officers constitute by a *lawful* Authority, and serving by a lawful Warrant, and could not be past by for the Time; nor could the Lord be served otherways than by them, and at that Time; it being unlawful to offer at any Altar but one, at which they did minister. And therefore, to keep up the Face of Ordinances and Authority, they were to be tolerated, as some think, until the Lord should remove them, which he did shortly thereafter. But it is not so with our *Curates*; they are not only *scandalous*, but are *Officers* constitute by an *unlawful* abjured Authority. Nor is there an absolute Necessity, tho' they be deserted, that all Ordinances be given up; for there are others, who may preach in any Place, whom we should hear.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Wherein the Argument, drawn from Matth. viii. 4. is examined.*

IT is argued, Tho' in Christ's Time the *Priests* Office was corrupted, and the Persons *godless* Men, yet Christ bade the *Leper* go to such, and offer his Gift, and desired him not to separate at all: Therefore *Church-Officers*, tho' never so corrupt, are to be *acknowledged*.

I look upon this Argument as the only Argument that's of any Moment, and therefore I shall the more seriously consider it. And therefore, for Answer, I say,

I. This Argument, if it prove any Thing, it proves too much; for then, tho' the *Prelates* and *Curates* should deny Christ, as the *High-Priests* at this Time did, according to our Antagonists Principles,

we should not separate, contrary to *Rev. xviii. 4.* Likeas therefore their Errors and Practices were more compatible then than now, so this might be the Occasion why there was no Separation then as well as now.

2. It will be hard to prove this High-Priest to be a notoriously scandalous Person; for the Priests had the Form of Piety, they were apparently holy without: For what Man could see whited Sepulchres like Graves, which none could see, *Luke xi. 44.* tho' full of Evils within, which none ever discovered until Christ did rip them up, and shew them in their proper Colours; when they had rejected him, lest their appearing Sanctity should delude the People? And Sins, tho' great, cannot be a Ground of Separation, until discovered and *obstinately* persisted in, *2 Theff. iii. 14.*

3. Be it so they were manifestly wicked, yet there are not so strict Commands for *personal* Separation, for *personal* Faults, in the *Jewish* Church, as now, and that for several Reasons, they being but an *Infant*-Church, and therefore not such a great Measure of outward Holiness required, as of us; God calling now every Man to *repent*; and winking in the Times of dark Discoveries of Duties; as likewise, because all the publick Service of God was restricted to one Place, and the Officers restricted to one Family and Tribe; which, if corrupted, and Separation thereon following, the Lord would get no publick Service at all. Therefore *Jewish Practices*, conform to their Government, distinct from ours, cannot be a good Rule or Precedent to us. But,

4. And on which I build much, consider that was in the Beginning of Christ's Ministry, at which Time Christ found all Things in a Confusion; and therefore was seeking by Degrees to rectify Things: And therefore it was not to be expected, that, in one Day, all Abuses should be helped; and so not to be separate  
from

from immediately. No, the Lord *Jesus* had his Time of Patience to wait on People, and therefore tolerated and suffered many Things, until, by his Apostles, he set up and erected the Christian Church, to which if, after patient Waiting, they did not hearken, they were to be separated from, *Acts* xix. 9. *But when diverse were hardened, and believed not, but spake Evil of that Way before the Multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples.* 'Tis clear our Case is not so: The Prelates are an old Enemy, with whom the Lord's Patience and the Church's is long since expired: And we did once extirpate Prelates and all Officers depending on them; and it is now settling, and therefore Submission in Hearing is the Yielding of the Cause, and Settling of them, which it was not then, it being settled before. And Christ was willing that the Government of the *Jewish* Church should last for a While, until his Resurrection, and therefore did nothing before that Time which would bring it down; so that our Case is not alike. If *Jewish* Abuses were come in upon the Christian Churches, after their Burial, and rising from the Dead as it were, I doubt very much if those who should bring them in were to be heard. But,

5. How can it be made out, that this was the High-Priest; and that this Priest was a wicked Man, who, by reason of yearly changing of the Office, might be thought to have had a Crack in it. It cannot be made out from the Text, which only says, *Shew thyself to the Priest.* This might be an inferior Priest, who might look unto the Leprosy, *Lev.* xiii. 2. The leprous Man shall be brought unto Aaron the Priest, or unto one of his Sons the Priests. And I am more confirmed in this, that, when Christ healed the ten Lepers, he desired them to shew themselves to the Priests, not to one, but many: Which inferior Office was not corrupted. And why, amongst these Orders, might there not be a *Zacharias*, who was not grossly scandalous?

lous ? So that these Things considered, the Weakness of the Argument may sufficiently appear.

S E C T. V.

*Wherein another Argument, taken from the constant Communion that was kept with the Jewish Church, notwithstanding all her Pollutions and Defections, is examined.*

MUCH is built on this *Argument*; and it may be propounded thus. If God's People and Prophets were never commanded to separate, but to worship in *Jerusalem*, *Deut. xii. 11, 12. & xv. 19, 20.* And, if that Generation was a perverse Generation, stiff-necked, proud and Murmurers; then any *Sinfulness* in *Officers*, or others, cannot be a *Ground of Separation*; in the *Jewish Church* we hear of no *Separation*. *Elijah, Asa, Josiab, Hezekiab, &c.* did eat the *Pass-over* with them, tho' many of them were *unclean*; and *Moses* entred into *Covenant* with them, tho' they *sacrificed their Sons to Devils*. Therefore we should *not now separate, notwithstanding of any Pollutions that yet have appeared.* For *Answer* to this, I say,

I. In general, That *Arguments* deduced from the *Jewish Church*, to this, are *not valid*. Indeed the *moral Laws* and *judicial Laws*, in *as far* as they *partake of Morality*, are *alike binding* on us; because the *Policy* of the *Jewish Church* was, in many Things, *different from* the *Policy* of *our Church*; whereof several *Grounds* might be given. As, (I.) Consider them as an *Infant-Church*, in such a *State and Condition*, and, for this Cause, did require many Things that the *Church of Christ*, being come to the *State of a full Man*, did not require. *Babes* must be guided one Way, and *Men* another. They were led by the *Sleeves* as *Children*, and hence nothing was *concredited* to their *Discretion*, and hence were under *Government*. Hence it was that *every Nail and Pin of the Tabernacle* was *ordained by the Lord* himself; the *Priesthood* was confined to one *Family*,

mily, *Gal. iv. 3.* and hence being come of *Aaron* was a great Qualification, which did *ipso facto* qualify them, except in Case of outward *gross* Scandals and *bodily* Defects. And hence the People were not left to chule. Hence, being of *dull Conceptions*, their Way of *Worship* was *more carnal*, *Gal. iv. 3.* *Heb. ix. 10.* The Lord determined the Time of Circumcision; and hence their Judgments and Promises were more visible and outward; and therefore I gather that those Times were Times of Ignorance in respect of thir Times. And hence there could not be so much Practice expected from them. *The Night is far spent, and the Day is at Hand: Let us therefore——put on the Armour of Light*, *Rom. xiii. 12.* The Patriarchs lived in *Polygamy*, yet the Prophets did *not separate* from them: But, amongst us, this would have been a *Sin of Presumption*, and so a Reason of *cutting off*. And hence being Children, more was born of them, than of us, and less required of and intrusted to them.

(2.) Let them be considered as a civil Corporation, inclosed in such national Bounds; and hence many Things convenient to them cannot, upon that Account, with the same Expediency, be pressed upon us: Hence no publick Place of Worship but *Jerusalem*: And hence, this being the determinate Place of Worship, if it were polluted, the Worship could not be set up in any other Place, *Deut. xii. 5.* *1 Kings viii. 29.* *John iv. 20.* and therefore they could not so conveniently separate.

(3.) Consider them as a *typical Church*, representing the Church of the *Gentiles*, *Psalms lxxiii.* I. hence called the *Israel of God*; and I doubt not but ye shall see many Things enjoined them not lawful to us. *Moses*, as a Type of *Christ*, consecrated *Aaron*, being for a *Testimony of such Things as should be spoken after*, *Heb. iii. 4, 5.* *Exod. xl. 13.* Yet it will not follow, that the Magistrate therefore may ordain Ministers. Hence, tho' they had an *High-Priest*, it will not follow that we must have a *Pope*; be-



because this *High-Priest* was typical of Christ. (4.) In the Manner of their Worship. Tho' their Women could not be *circumcised*, yet it will not follow that they should not be *baptized*. So the *Passover*, being a Sign of the common Mercy of Deliverance out of *Egypt*, hence all might partake of it; but all should not partake of the *Lord's Supper*. Look unto the Covenant by which they had their fundamental external Right to Church-Membership, and ye shall see a Difference. For this Covenant being made with *Abraham*, as typical-Father of the Faithful, representing Christ, there was no more required than to come of *Abraham*, to give them Right to this typical Membership; for likeas it is the Promise that gives Right unto the Privileges, *Isaac* typifying the Promise, as is clear from *Rom. ix. 7, 8.* so likewise all the Children of *Isaac* had Right to that outward Covenant. And, as *Abraham* was the Father of the Faithful, and *Isaac* a Type of the Promise, thro' whom all their Seed did typically partake thereof: Even so *Jesus Christ*, and all that are visibly his Servants and Children, or the Children of his Servants, have Right through him to the Privileges of the better Testament. And by all this it appears, that there was not so great Ground for Separation then, as now. Bur,

2. I answer, This Argument proves too much, if it proves any Thing; for then, should the *Prelates* and *Curates* turn *Idolaters*, preach false Doctrines, as the *Scribes* and *Pbarisees*, sacrifice to Devils, as the *Israelites* did, that yet we should not separate; and then in no Case were Separation lawful: And then we did ill in separating from *Rome* upon the Account of mere Corruptions.

3. The Argument proves, That we should not separate from them that are *Curates*, either in *Synods*, or in *Hearing*; for we cannot shew a Command, as is alledged, for Separation from *Jewish Sanhedrims* in the Time of greatest Impurity. And let those who come

not to *Synods* answer this. Nor did I ever hear a Reason that did militate against sitting in *Synods*, but would equally strike against *Hearing*, tho' not so openly. But oh! there is not alike Hazard in the one, as in the other: And *Prelates* are indifferent, and will get *Curates* to fill up their Places as Officers.

4. This will follow, That we ought *not* to separate totally and fundamentally from them, and that the Scandals of a Church can never be so great, as to deny all Relation, either to God or his People. Hence they are called *his People*, even when in open Rebellion against him, *Isa. i. 3.* and hence they are still *his People*, *Ezek. xxxvii. 12.* And the excommunicate Person, that is cut off, is a *Brother*, *2 Thess. iii. 15.* And hence we must love, and have a Feeling with them; they should be wailing for the Valley of Vision; yea, and admonished and reprov'd. A total Separation from the Church, or a positive Separation, we deny, erecting ourselves into an opposite Church, as *Separatists* did. And hence ye find, in Times of the grossest Iniquities, the *Jews* were still his People; the Lord did not give up with them, but exhorted, reprov'd and threatned them, tho' he hid his Face and had no Pleasure in their Sacrifices.

5. It cannot be proven from Scripture, that the *Saints* or *Prophets* did allowedly join with any notorious obstinate scandalous Persons, or Corporations, in Acts of publick Worship, until they gave some Signs of their Repentance. And, when I shall see it proven, I shall submit. And therefore, notwithstanding of this relative fundamental Union, they yet kept no Fellowship in Ordinances. Christ's Presence at *Jewish* Feasts will not do it, because he was present at the Feast of the Dedication, which was no Ordinance of God. And whenever, after they proved scandalous and obstinate, Christ and his Apostles were present, it was rather taking the Occasion of the frequent Multitudes, that were there convey'd, to speak

Speak to them, than as any Act to *shew their Countenancing* of such. For, in the Times of Superstition and Apostasy, there was no *true Worship* at all, 2 *Chron.* xxix. 6, 7. And so we need not enquire what the Lord's People did in Times of Apostasy; for then there was no Worship except idolatrous Worship. And, when the Temple-Doors were locked, and no Access there, and when the Lord raised up a good King, they took such of the People as had gone astray; but first they purged *Baal's Priests* away: And they testified their Repentance, by professing the contrary Religion, and by taking on new Engagements.

6. It will follow, that, whenever such do *turn* to the Lord, they are to be *joined with*. And I deny it. And let any who can undertake to prove it, that ever any of the Servants of God did allowedly join with *Apostates*, while in a Course of Defection, in any publick Ordinance: And it is a mere Alledgance to say otherways: But when *Moses, Elijah* and *Asa* entered into Covenant, or took the Passover, they first *purged*, and the People professed the *forsaking of their Way*, and did *sanctify* themselves, and gave *some Signs* of their *Repentance*. And now, I say, let *Curates* repent and mourn, and quit the *Evil of their Way*, and *renew their Covenant*, and we will yet *continue with* them; we will not hold the Door out upon them for ever. And this is all that this Argument will prove.

7. Tho' the Prophets did never command to *separate* from the *visible Church*, yet did they command to *separate* from the *false Prophets*, that did officiate without Authority from God, and to withdraw from them. *Jer.* xxiii. 16. they are commanded expressly *not to bear or hearken* to them. In *Jer.* x. 21. *the Flocks* of the *false Prophets* are threatened to be *scattered*. In the *New-Testament*, Christ, in *John* x. 9. saith, that *the Sheep* did not bear the *Thieves and*

Robbers; yea, *Matth. xv. 14.* that we should let *blind Guides* (such as the *Rulers* then were) *alone*: For if the *Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch.* And we only at present *separate* from *corrupt Church-Guides*, because authorized by an *unlawful Authority*, and to make them *ashamed*, because they carry on a *Course of Apostasy*: And therefore the *Argument* strikes not against us, who keep up *Communion and Fellowship* with the *Body of Professors*, and do not set up ourselves in a *distinct Corporation* from them, but continue in our *old Relation*; only we join not with our *Officers*, since they have *left us*, and broken the *Relation* we were in, and entred into another. The *Member* is not the *Body*; a *Member* may be cut off, and yet the *Body* remain.

8. It is true we *separate* from the *Body of the Church*, when they go to hear the *Curates*, and will not go with them. But this is not *Separation* that is *total* or *positive*, but a *Withdrawing* from them in *some Acts*. There may be an *Union* with the *Body*, tho' there be not *Concurrence* with it in *all Acts*, especially when they are judged *sinful*. Obedience to this *Command, Hos. iv. 15.* *Come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven with the rest,* was no *unwarrantable Separation*. There may be *Union* when there is not *total Communion*. We acknowledge our *Union* with the *Body of Professors* in these *Lands*, and do join and keep *Fellowship* with them in all other *uncontroverted Duties*. And hence we *separate* not *sinfully*: Our *Separation*, in that *Case*, would be a *Separation with Whores, and a Sacrificing with Harlots, Hos. iv. 14.*

#### S E C T. VI.

*Wherein an Argument, drawn from the Practice of Christian Churches, is examined.*

IT is argued, that, if the *Churches of Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus,* and other *Churches of Asia,* had  
several

several Corruptions in them, and Scandals both as to Doctrine and Manners, and yet there never was a *Command* for Separation, but, on the contrary, Ordinances were still countenanced; then we ought not, in this present Case, to separate from the *Curates*.

Many Things might be said to this; and the Application of what hath been said, in the Answer to the preceeding Argument, would take much of the Strength of this Argument away: Only two Things I shall now say. 1. The Argument proves that there should not be a *fundamental* Separation from the Church and Body thereof: This I grant; but speaks nothing against Separation from *corrupt* Officers. But *Paul* saith expressly of these, *I would they were cut off that trouble you*, Gal. v. 12.

2. As Sin is the only Cause of moral Separation, so it is not every Corruption or Scandal that gives Ground of Separation; but *gross* Scandals, and these *wilfully* and *obstinately* continued in, especially if there be a designed stated Course of Apostasy and Rebellion prosecuted and avowed, tho' not under that Name, but pretending something else. Now, altho' I grant, that there were Scandals in Doctrine and Manners in the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and *Ephesus*, yet these Churches did *not* *obstinately* continue in them; the Apostles behoved to warn and admonish, and to try gentle Means. *2 Tim.* ii. 18. ere they could use the last Remedy, which was *Separation*. And, if this would not have done, *Paul* tells he would come with a *Rod*; and these Ways proved so effectual, that Abuses were helped. *Acts* xix. 9. *Paul* waited two Years on the *Jews* ere he separated. It is possible, that, if this had been the first Time *Prelacy* came in amongst us, we would have born longer with the *Conformists*; but it being an *old* Quarrel, already debated, and now entring in upon us, and the *Curates* therein *obstinate*, and *avowing* it, contrary

to their *great Oaths* to God, and withal *settling it by a Law*, and *authoritatively* commanding all to *forbear* to speak of it, under *Pain of Treason*; this gives us Ground to think them incurable; and that our staying with them will rather harden them, and strengthen the *Evil*, than any Means we can use will do them Good: And hence, they being *presumptuous*, we *withdraw*, 2 *Thess.* iii. 14.

## S E C T. VII.

*Wherein an Argument, drawn from the Evil of Separation, the Practice of Separatists and Brownists, and the Doctrine of Protestant sound Writers, is examined.*

SEPARATION (it is argued) was always accounted a sinful Thing; and our reformed Writers have generally disowned the *Brownists*.

In answer to this Argument, I shall consider three Things. (1.) Speak something of *Separation* itself. (2.) Speak a little of the *Separatists* and *Brownists*. (3.) A Word to the Doctrine of *Protestant* Writers.

I. Now, for the first, *Separation*, I say, it hath been an old Device to affright People from the Truth, by representing *sound* Tenets under odious Vizards and Masks. And hence it is, that the *Way* of the godly poor Ones in *Britain* and *Ireland* is branded by some *great Heads*, but *ill Hearts*, with the *Asperſion* of *Schiſm*, *Separation*, and I know not what; only with *big Words* to *terrify* People from their *Duty*. And tho' this hath been essayed, yet have the *Lord's* People found Mercy to stick to their Duty, notwithstanding of all the Misrepresentations of it: But, for Vindication of such and their Practice, let these Things be considered.

I. That the *physical Act* of *Separation* is in itself *indifferent*, that is, neither intrinsically good nor evil, but is capable of either, according to the Grounds and Causes of it. And therefore sometimes it is *Du-*

ty, Rev. xviii. 4. ——— Come out of her, my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues. And sometimes it is sinful, Heb. x. 25. Not forsaking the Assembling of ourselves together, as the Manner of some is, but exhorting one another. And therefore think not all who separate do therefore necessarily sin. There is an allowable Separation, and there is an unallowable Joining, 2 Cor. vi. 14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers: For what Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness? And what Communion hath Light with Darknes? Hos. iv. 14. I will not punish your Daughters when they commit Whoredom, nor your Spouses when they commit Adultery: For themselves are separated with Whores, and they sacrifice with Harlots: Therefore the People that do not understand shall fall.

2. As Sin or sinful Defects are the Grounds of Separation, as is clear from Scripture; so it is not every Sin or Fault that should give Ground of Separation; but they must have these four Qualifications.

(1.) They must be gross and visibly odious in their own Nature. It must not be understood of such Faults as David speaketh of, Psal. xix. 12. Who can understand his Errors? But it must be understood of more gross Faults, such as these that are called the Pollutions of the World, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Faults of such Persons as David calleth wicked Transgressors, Psalm lix. 5. Whose Spots are not the Spots of God's Children, Deut. xxxii. 5. And therefore, tho' Saints be not perfect, yet we keep Fellowship with them.

(2.) They must be manifested open Sins, known, not secret Heart Sins, tho' never so vile; for *de occultis non judicat Ecclesia*; that is, hidden Things come not under the Cognizance of the Church. And hence mere Suppositions will not be enough. And hence Communion with Hypocrites, not Devils, such as Judas was, is lawful, when his Devilry appears not,

*John vi. 70.* And hence the *foolish Virgins*, tho' they wanted Oil, yet continued with the *Wise*, *Matth. xxv.* And the *Tares*, by Dispensation of Providence, get Leave to grow among the *Wheat*, *Matth. xiii. 29.*

(3.) They must proceed from *Wilfulness*, and there must be *Presumption* in them, not Sins, tho' gross, as *Polygamy*, proceeding from Want of Light, as it did in the *Patriarchs*, or other *Infirmities*, which should be healed with the *Spirit of Meekness*, *Gal. vi. 1.* *Numb. xv. 28, 30.* *Presumptuous Sinners must be cut off.* And therefore Consideration must be regarded of Times, Persons and Occasions: And that, at one Time, may be Sin of Infirmity, and in one Person, which in another Person, at any other Time, may be judged *Presumption*. *Polygamy* is now another Thing than it was before; and so is *Conformity to Prelacy*, than it was sometime, or than it is yet to other Nations: God winks in Times of Ignorance.

(4.) It must be joined with *Obstinacy*. And hence, tho' the *Corinthians* were drunken, and that at solemn Meetings: Tho' *Thomas* misbelieved, and that a fundamental Article; and tho', for a Time, the Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia* were turned heterodox, as to the Articles of Justification and the Resurrection, yet not to be separated from, until Means of reclaiming were used, *2 Tim. ii. 18.* which failing, *Paul* declares he would come with a Rod, *1 Cor. iv. 21.* and would not spare, *2 Cor. xiii. 2.* *Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17.* *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone: If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother. But, if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word may be established. And, if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but, if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican.* And hence we separate not for every Fault. And, if the *Conformists* Faults have not all



all this in them, then we shall not desire to *separate*.

Their Sins are *gross*, because *perjured*; they are *open*, and cannot be accounted *Sins of Infirmity*, except they proceed from *wilful Ignorance*. And do they not *obstinately*, nay, *avowedly* continue in their Sin, saying they sin not, pacifying all by a Law?

3. The *third* Thing considerable is this, That there may be *Separation lawfully*, and that from Churches or Persons, tho' there be no Sentence of Excommunication, 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. *Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof, from such turn away: 2 Cor.* vi. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers.* These Commands; if I mistake not, were not directed to Church-Guides, but to particular Persons as such. The *Jewish Church* was never excommunicated, and yet there was a *Separation* from it, *Acts* xix. 9. *But when divers were hardened, and spake evil of that Way before the Multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples.* Nor was the *Popish Church* excommunicated to this Day, and yet there is a *Separation* from her, and a *lawful Separation* too. Say not they are unclean until they be pronounced unclean.

4. Let it be considered that there is a *passive Separation*, and an *active Separation*, expressed both of them distinctly in Scripture; the one expressed by the Term *casting out*, 1 *Cor.* v. 2, 7. *Tit.* iii. 10. *Numb.* xv. 30. the other, *viz.* the *passive*, expressed by the Term of *coming out from*, *Rev.* xviii. 4. 2 *Cor.* vi. 14. This *passive Separation* is, when the sound Part of the Church is the weaker and lesser Party, and so could not execute conveniently, nor possibly legally, the Censures of the Church against a strong Party, carrying on a Course of *Defection*, either in *Heresy*, *Malignancy*, *Worship*, or *Practice*. As we did when we separated from *Rome*. Conceive it thus: If there were an *Infection* in the Kingdom, while some few Persons only were infected, then were the Orders of the Kingdom anent them to be executed

executed, and they to be shut up: But, if the Whole or Body of the Kingdom were infected, and a few only whole, these few could not execute the publick Law against the Multitude, by confining them to Chambers, or cutting them off, which is *active Separation*; but they were to remove themselves, which is *passive Separation*.

5. There is, and may be *real Union*, where there is no *Communion*; or there may be a Right to Church-Membership, when there is no Ground to the actual enjoining of them; and Ministers may have Right to their Office, yet not to the Exercise thereof. There is *jus ad rem*, and *jus in re*. Some Divines say, That, by the imputed Righteousness of Christ, there is a fundamental Right to Justification ere they believe; but their Right is personal and actual when they believe. And others say, Faith gives Right to Heaven, but Sanctification gives immediate Right to possess it; grounded on *Rev. xxii. 14.* Tho' Parents run mad, they do not forfeit the Respect their Children owe them. A Priest, by an *accidental Unclean-ness*, did *lose his Right to exercise* his Office, tho' not the *Right to his Office*: So do *suspended Ministers*; they have *Right to their Office*, but not *Right to exercise it*. The Lord may acknowledge a People to be his Church, tho', by reason of actual Corruptions, he hide his Face, and keep not Fellowship with them. There may be a Separation from some Members thereof, and yet *real Union* with the Church continued. And,

6. There may be *Fellowship* with the Church in *some Acts of Worship*, and *negative Separation* in *other* which are pure, *Hof. iv. 14.* and yet *Union* with the Church. Tho' we dare not join with the *Body of Professors* in *some Acts of publick Worship*, for Reasons already given, yet we *separate not totally or positively* from them; yet in *others* we join with them, and do look upon them as Church-Members

in one Relation and Tye with us, that they were formerly in, which we are willing to continue. The Prophets exhorted, admonished, and reprov'd the backslidden Church of *Israel*, tho' yet they kept not Communion with them in other Acts.

7. According to the *Measure of Guilt*, so must the *Separation* be. Some must be *withdrawn* from, some *delivered to Satan*, some to be *Anathema Maranatha*. And hence there must be *greater* *Withdrawing* and *Separation* from *Curates* than *others*, because they are *more* guilty, and are *more* intrinsically Members of the *Army that is against the Lamb*. Jude, Ver. 22, 23. *And of some have Compassion, making a Difference: And others save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire; bating even the Garment spotted by the Flesh.* Ezek. xxxiv. 17. *And as for you, O my Flock, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I judge between Cattle and Cattle, between the Rams and the He-goats.*

8. Whatever *incapacitates* particular Members to be joined with in Fellowship, *incapacitates* a greater Body made up of *such* Members: For whatever is necessarily predicated of an Individual of any Kind, or of all Individuals, is predicated likewise of many Individuals, which is the Kind, or *Totum*, or Whole. This is clear in itself.

9. What gives *Ground* therefore to *active* Separation in a *constitute* Church, gives *Ground* of *passive* Separation in a *troubled*, decayed, corrupted Church.

10. As therefore gross scandalous Sins, *obstinately* continued in, are a *Ground* of *active* Separation in a *constitute* Church, the Members tainted herewith are incapable of Communion; so in a *backslidden*, corrupted, troubled Church, *scandalous* and *obstinate* Sins give *Ground* of *passive* Separation. *Whosoever loves not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* I confess it is not every Degree of Hatred that brings under this Curse.

II. There may be a *Separation* from *Curates* and *Church-Officers*, tho' there be not a *Separation* from the *Church itself*, as I have proven in Answer to the preceding Argument. And therefore, tho' we separate from *Curates*, yet it will not follow that we separate from the *Church*.

And now, who is it that can deny any one of these Propositions? We acknowledge a *Separation*, but not a *sinful Separation*: We acknowledge a *Separation* from *Curates*, but not from the *Church*; we separate *passively* from the *Church* in *some Acts* of *Worship*, which we judge *polluted*, yet do not separate from the *Church* *totally* and *positively*; our *Union* with them *continues* still; we *erect* not ourselves into a *distinct Church* from them, but join and are united in old relative *Tyes* that we were engaged in before; and in *other Acts* of *Worship* join with the *Body of Professors*; yea, we *mourn* for them before the *Lord*, because of their *sinful Compliances* with the *Curates*.

II. As to *Separatists* and *Brownists*, 'tis hard to speak of them, being a *Stranger* to their *Practice*, and not altogether acquainted with their *Principles*: But, I think, our *Case* is not altogether like theirs. For,

1. We had got *Prelacy* *purged out*, and it is now *entring in* upon us: They are the *Aggressors*, and we now *stand to our Liberties*. The *Brownists* did so; *Corruptions* got in upon them, and *Prelates* were in the *Chair*. And therefore,

2. They should have born with *more Patience*, and not been *hasty*, until *all Means* had been tried. The *Corruptions* of these *Times*, tho' the same in *Matter* with ours, yet not the same in *Manner* and *Circumstances*. And the *Circumstances* arguing and *concomitating* our *Defections* are sadder, and do render the *guilty Persons* *more odious* than they did *then*. And therefore, tho' we now should exceed in our *Separation*, it is no *Wonder*, seeing their *Guilt*,  
by

by reason of aggravating Circumstances, doth exceed theirs. But,

3. And that which, most of all, doth found a Difference, They did not only break off *Fellowship* in some Acts, but in all Acts; they not only brake up *Communion*, but *Union*, and did loose themselves from the *relative* Tye they were in formerly, and did enter into a *new* Combination, not only *subjectively* different from the old, but *formally*; and accounted none Church-Members but such as would join with them, and did *unchurch* all others. We do not so; our Separation is *negative*, not *passive*. And I think that *Prelates* and *Curates*, and other Professors, that have quit their old Station and Friends in it, and entred into a new Relation, are rather to be accounted *Separatists* than *we*.

III. Hence it follows, what we are to think of the Doctrine of reformed Protestants. I say, (1.) It is not an *infallible* Argument, nor are the *Doctrines* and *Judgment* of Men an *infallible* Rule. (2.) Their Case now is *different* from what it was then; and not being guilty of Schism, or of *positive* Separation, as the *Brownists* were, we think that *Protestant* Writers do not condemn us, when they condemn them. (3.) It is true, at first View, many Things in their Writings would seem to contradict us and our Principles. But, as one well observes, "Godly Men do sometimes over-reach themselves, and, endeavouring to strike at Error, which is before them, with the drawing back of their Hand, to give it the more sound Stroke, they seem to wound Truth a little, with their back Blow." *Protestant* Writers went possibly with the nearest in refuting *Brownists*. *Luther*, in refuting *Papists* and *Justification* by Works, through Violence, gave the *Antinomians* Ground to think he favoured them. *Paul*, writing against the *Legalists*, is to be distinguished from *James* writing against the loose *Gospel*-lers;

lers; and the one seems to speak one Thing, and the other another, yet really contradict not one another. So *Protestants*, speaking against *positive Separatists* dividing from the Church, must speak another Way than we, who write against, and have ado with *Prelates*. And I question not but in our Case they would speak otherways. The Contradiction therefore is *not real*, but *apparent*.

## S E C T. VIII.

*Wherein an Argument, drawn from the Contempt of Ordinances, is considered and answered.*

BUT it may be said, that we not only *separate* from *Persons* and *Curates*, but from the *publick Ordinances*, and so subtract our *publick Homage* we owe unto God.

For Answer to this, consider,

1. The mere *physical Act of Preaching*, as it is reading of a Text, opening and applying it, is not an *Ordinance of God*, unless it be by *Men sent*, Rom. x. 15. *How shall they preach except they be sent?* For otherways, if a Woman or Child get a Sermon by Heart, and start up to the Pulpit and repeat it, it were the Ordinance of God, and we were *bound* to hear it. When *Uzziab* was to offer Incense, do ye think it was an Ordinance of God, altho' Sacrifice was commanded of God? And were the People therefore to countenance him in it?

2, An Ordinance of God properly is the objective Command, and hence is not the Command itself, but the Object thereof. The Command itself is the Direction and manifesting Will of the Lawgiver concerning such a Thing, which Thing is the Ordinance of God. Nothing then is an Ordinance but what is the Object of a Command. For as nothing is a *Sin*, but what is *contrary to a Command*, so nothing is *Duty*, but what is *conform to a Command*; otherways fear this, *Who hath required this at your Hands?*

3. Some

3. Some Things *generically* considered may be an Ordinance or Duty, and yet, as contradicted to its individual Circumstances, is no Duty, but may be a Sin. So Preaching may be some Way said to be an Ordinance, yet is not always an Ordinance, as dispensed by this and that Man, or at such a Time.

4. There are some Duties which tye Men as such, *viz.* as rational Creatures owing Subjection to God, and which all Men are bound to do; such as praying to God, and praising of God. And hence it is the Duty of all to pray to, praise, love and fear God, and hear his Word, which is a Mean of Conversion, and a Mean of Strength. And hence Regenerate and Unregenerate are bound to hear. And hence we may join with unregenerate Persons in such Acts; and hence we may sing Psalms with a mixed Multitude, because all are bound to speak of God, and praise him, *Jer. x. 7. Isa. xlv. 22. Psalm c. 1.* and many more Places will evince this. But then, again, there are other Acts or Duties which are competent to be done by *Persons so and so qualified*, and in such a Place and Capacity, that if any other undertake to do it but they, they sin: And of this Nature are Ministerial Acts, and Communicating at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; for it is required of a Minister, that he be in another Capacity for discharging the Duties of his Ministerial Calling, than any unregenerate Man can be. And hence,

5. I affirm that Preaching, and other Duties of the Ministerial Calling, are Acts to which neither God nor pure Churches did call or command visibly graceless Persons to perform; yea, and tho' chosen, if appearing in this moral Incapacity, Acts done by them are not to be accounted moral Ordinances, but Sin and Iniquity, which the Lord doth not accept. What Law is there for commanding a visibly graceless Man to preach? What? Is there not a Law against it? *Psal. l. 16. Ezek. xlv. 10.* Is there not a dreadful  
 Plague

Plague denounced against the Pastors who speak, and the Lord hath not sent them, but speak or prophesy the Vision of their own Heart, or steal the Word of the Lord from others? Can they go in and out before the People? Can they administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper without eating and drinking Damnation to themselves, seeing they eat unworthily? And,

6. Our *Curates* being visibly scandalous, the Lord never commanded them, for it were a Disgrace unto him to have such Servants. I say, he never commanded them to preach: And therefore to all who are sensible of this, their Preaching is no Ordinance of God; and, in not countenancing them, there is no Disrespect shewn to Ordinances; for when a Duty, in respect of Circumstances, becomes a Sin, it is no longer an Ordinance of God. And I have already proven, in *Chap. 2. Sect. 4.* that all the *Conformists* authoritative Acts are sinful, polluted and abominable; and therefore, in discountenancing them, we discountenance *no Ordinance of God.*

7. It appears we do not discountenance Ordinances, because we have itill an high Opinion and Esteem of them. It is the Griet of our Souls that we have no Ordinances; and, when we can get them purely administrate, we go many Miles to join; we only discountenance the *Curates*. And, if it were possible to have Ordinances, without involving ourselves in the Guilt of Communion with *Curates*, and so establishing the present Course on Foot, we would not *separate*: But, seeing we cannot, we are excusable. And therefore I say, as *David* did to *Saul*, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. *If the Lord have stirred up the Ruler against us, let him accept an Offering: But if they be the Children of Men, who are to blame for this, cursed be they before the Lord, for they have driven us this Day from the Ordinances of God, and have defiled the Waters with their Feet, that they cannot be drunken.*



## S E C T. IX.

Wherein an Argument, drawn from the Practice of our Predecessors, is answered.

FARTHER it is argued, that in this we condemn the Practice of our renowned Ancestors, yea, and the present godly Men who hear, and yet were and are very valiant for the Lord, and have given their Testimony against this Way of Prelacy.

I answer, (1.) Men or their Practices are not our Rule. God is now drawing all Eyes to look to himself, and to cease from Man. (2.) We oppose godly Men to godly Men. It cannot be denied but there are godly, judicious and holy Men, both Ministers and Professors, against Hearing; and why will ye condemn them? Let the one balance the other. And seeing there are diverse Ways in this, *To the Law, and to the Testimony*, Isa. viii. 20. Ye cannot say or pretend the universal Consent of the Godly and Judicious. (3.) Our first worthy Reformers and Predecessors did sit in Synods and communicate with them; which the Godly do not now. Nor will it avail to say, the Case is different now from what it was then; for I may in some Respect say it is different as to Hearing. But, then, were we sworn against Prelacy? Was it established by Law with the same Power and Jurisdiction it hath now? These Synods were called and dissolved by the *Prelate*; he had in these his *negative Voice*; they did not chuse their *Moderators*, but were *prelimited* in this; and they wanted *Ruling Elders*, which were an *essential constitutive Part* of their *Meeting*. And hence some few were against the *Lawfulness* of sitting with them at all. (4.) *Reformation* advances by *Degrees*; tho' the *posterior* Reformations do advance *Steps beyond* the *first* or *former*, the *former* are not therefore condemned. We hear, when *Prelates* were established, some *scrupled* at *Hearing* and *absented* themselves, as the *Author* of the *History* of the  
Douglasses

*Douglasses* shews. (5.) And truly, tho' they did join in all Acts of Worship and Discipline with them; tho' they heard, did sit in Synods, yea, and were ordained by them, and did communicate with them, they were more excusable to do so than we are: They were not so deeply engaged in Practice against them. Our Government hath stood us much Blood, that it did not them; the *Prelates* and *Curates* were not generally so wicked as to their personal Carriage, nor the Land so explicitly by Oath engaged against them, tho' they were so materially and equivalently, as the Controversy at the Assembly at *Glasgow*, Anno 1638. anent that same *Particular*, and Sense of that *Article* of the *Covenant*, manifests; nor was *Conformity* so odious a Thing then as it is now; so that, however, we shall not much meddle with their Practice, either to condemn or justify it, yet this we shall say, That it was more excusable in them to comply, than us.

## S E C T. X.

*Wherein an Argument, drawn from the Danger of needless Suffering, is answered.*

IT is yet argued, that we should not cast ourselves on Suffering; and tho' we might be clear for the Thing to do it, yet not to suffer for it: As likewise, by this Means, the Powers will be provoked to fall upon the poor Remnant, and so root out the People of God out of the Land.

For Answer, I am apt to believe that this is the strangest Argument of all; and, if we could loose this Knot, and satisfy Persons anent it, the rest of the Arguments would soon be refuted: And this, I fear, is the Life of too many of all the rest. 'Tis above my Undertaking to remove Fears. But what may be said in Answer to this take it briefly.

I. Tho' ye have not full Perswasion, that *Hearing* is a *Sin*, yet have ye not some *Probabilities* of it? And were it not wise to walk with Moon-Light when ye cannot

cannot walk with the Light of the Sun. The best know but in Part. If your Judgment do more incline to *not Hearing* than *Hearing*, yet ye should follow it, tho' ye have *Fears* and *Doubts*.

2. Are ye in a *doubting* Condition, and know not what to *chuse*? Then it is certain ye are to *suspend*, and so *not bear*; for ye are to do nothing *doubtingly*, and *Hearing* is *positive*. And tho', when ye were suffering for this, ye could not say that *not Hearing* was *Duty positively*, yet might you not say, that ye suffered for *Righteousness*, because ye suffer for not going against your *Light*, and for not doing a Thing *doubtingly*? which is indeed a *sufficient* Ground for *suffering*.

3. Go but aside, and, without Prejudice, or any forestalled Thoughts, seek to the Lord sincerely for Light in it; and follow him in the Means, till he reveal his Will to thee, and be resolved to comply with what he will tell thee. Thou sayest, Thou art in Doubt, but yet never settest one Half-Day apart, never art earnest in Prayer and Meditation in enquiring after Duty. And who is to blame then? It is like ye may die so. No, but ye have taken Things on Trust; or, if Light come not in suddenly, ye either will not, or else are afraid to be convinced; and hence God answers you according to the Idol of your Heart.

4. 'Tis the liker to be Duty, that the Cross attend on it. And I suspect that very much in Times of Tryal which Persecutors are for. Oh! how have we discorded with the Cross of Christ? What Enemies are we now to it? It was the Glory and Gain of primitive Christians to suffer, but it is now Shame and Loss. Ah! vile World! Hence Paul (Gal. v. 9.) concluded that *he should not preach Circumcision, for then the Offence of the Cross would cease*. So now thir Times would be no Tryal in Haste, if *Hearing* were absolutely given to *Curates*; none would be troubled;

the *Offence of the Cross* would cease. This is rather a *Proof of Hearing* than an *Argument* against it.

5. And who knows, but if the whole *Body of Professors*, or a considerable *Part* of them, would not hear, they then might get better *Quarters* than they do now; this would terrify *Adversaries*. *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you*: But yield, and he follows. By losing our *Life* we find it, and by saving it we lose it. This makes the *Enemy* encroach upon the poor *Handful*, and will do so upon you at last. I remark, that the *Prelates* are like the *Devil*, who is worst to his obedient *Servants*. I see none more threatened or watched over, than those who are most punctual in observing and studying not to contravene the *Laws*. But enough of this *brutish Argument*.

#### S E C T. XI.

*Wherein the rest of the Arguments are considered and answered, with the Conclusion of the Whole.*

*Arg. I.* THE *Curates* are *actual Ministers* by their *Ordination*, were never *deposed*, and therefore may *preach*. I answer,

1. They were *ordained*, but their *Ordination*, being *contrary* to the *fundamental Laws* of *God's Word*, which were therein *substantially* violated; hence it is *illegal*, and so consequently *null*. If a *Person* be by *Law* incapable to be chosen, but yet chosen, the *Election* is null. So it is here.

2. Suppose they had been *lawfully* ordained, as *Judas* was, yet, by their *Apostasy* and *Transgression*, they have fallen from their *Apostleship*, *Acts* i: 25. or have gone astray from it; which till they help, by disowning the *Prelate*, they are to be accounted as those who wander away, and so are separate from their *Commission*.

3. Suppose they be *actual Ministers*, yet they are in their *Uncleanness* and *Leprosy of Perjury*; and therefore,

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therefore, until they be washen and purged in Water of Repentance, they cannot minister before the Lord. All that they touch shall be unclean; they are now in their Madness, and Rest is best for them. *Let them alone, Hag. ii. 13.*

4. Tho' it cannot be said of all, (as some will) that they are scandalous, and have Power; yet is this their Power disjointed, and running against what we had sworn. They preach but by an unlawful Authority, which we have disowned and sworn against. And therefore, until the Power flow in its right Channel, and from its right Fountain, from which we were only bound to acknowledge it, we cannot be bound to submit. We did swear against a Power ingrossed in one, and flowing from one.

5. As there may be *Separation* without *Excommunication*, as I have shewn, so there may be *Ground of withdrawing* from Ministers without *Deposition*.

6. And it is by Accident, thro' the Corruptions of the Church, that they are not deposed; for there is no Doubt, but, if the Church could recover, they would be put out.

7. And therefore, tho' we cannot separate from them *actively*, by cutting them away from us, because wanting Authority, or incapable for the Time to exercise it, yet let us do it *passively*, that is, by separating ourselves from them, or withdrawing or coming out from amongst them. If I cannot, wanting Power, shut up an infectious Person, yet I may withdraw myself, without Order of publick Authority, that I may not be infected with or by him.

*Arg. II.* If ye deny *Conformists* to be *Ministers*, and if ye want Preaching, then have ye no *actual* Church in *Britain* and *Ireland*; and this is absurd; for, where there are no Officers, there is no Church. *I answer,* We have an *entitative* Church notwithstanding. But (2.) we have a real organical Church, consisting of outward invisible Professors and other Officers,  
who

who are now laid by, and put from their Charges, whō, tho' they do not actually exercise their Office, yet notwithstanding ceaseth not the Church of *Britain* and *Ireland* to be a true Church, no more than a Tree in Winter ceaseth to be a Tree, tho' it do not actually bring forth Fruit: And a Man, while he is bound Hand and Foot, so as he cannot exercise any of his Members, is yet a compleat organical Man. So is this Church in these Nations a compleat Church, tho', by reason of civil Laws and Edicts, the Hands and Members of this Church are bound up, that they cannot exercise their Office.

*Arg. III.* If it is not lawful to hear *Curates*, then shall we want Preaching altogether; and God shall have no publick Worship or Honour at all, and this is hard: Better have a Face of a Church and Worship, than none at all.

*I answer,* I mean not, that, after we had quit the *Prelate* and his Officers, we should ly at Home like Snails in our Shell and sleep, and do nothing but stand gazing. It was never to cause People sit idle that I pressed this; but that, forsaking the corrupt Assemblies and Tents of these wicked Men, every Man and Woman, professing to fear the Lord, should henceforth redeeming the Time in their Places and Stations, according to their Power, fall to and again build the House of the Lord; that Ministers, who have now, of a long Time, waited, and I fear longer than they have been allowed, would fall to, and, as they have Opportunity, preach to the People, (fear not the Want of Opportunities) and this in the Face of all Dangers, and exercise their Office as they did formerly, tho' not so openly. The Lord's Worship now is not restricted to Place or Multitude; 'tis indifferent as to *Jerusalem*, or this *Mount*. And, tho' it be to be lamented, that Christ cannot be publicly honoured, yet let us go to the Wilderness, when we cannot go elsewhere. Let Professors pray, hear,  
speak,

speak, and do what is competent for them in this, and every one amend the Evil of his Ways, and turn unto the Lord. And, while ye join with the *Prelate*, this will never be got done, but leave a *corrupt idol Government* in the House of God, and *Presbytery* to be forgotten for ever; and the Controversy with *Amalek*, which the Lord will have kept up for all Generations, born down in Silence. But, if every one would henceforth, in the Name of the Lord, with one Mind and Heart, set to their Hand to the Work, the Lord himself would be with us, and we should see *Satan shortly falling like Lightning from Heaven*, and the *Prelates* cursed Kingdom to totter and shake, tho' neither by Power nor Might, yet by the Spirit of the Lord it should be; the greatest Difficulty in all which Work is *Want of Will*.

#### C O N C L U S I O N.

T O conclude, then, let me in Love exhort all that love our Lord Jesus, to come out from amongst the *Antichristian Crew*, to touch nothing that belongs to this wicked People, lest ye be consumed. It is to be feared we have not right Uptakings of *Conformists* and their Way, and that *Conformity* is not looked upon with all its aggravating Circumstances. The civil Laws of Nations have this as a fundamental universal Rule, That no infamous Person be intrusted with any Office, not so much as to be a Witness. But ah, Lord! How have we degenerated, when the vilest Persons on the Earth, when the Perjured, Profane, and Persecutors are intrusted with the greatest Concernments of the Lord Jesus. Oh! to what a low Ebb are we come? If the *Conformists* Sin had been simply an Act of Lying, Drunkenness, or Swearing, or any other transient Sin, the Matter had been the less; they might have had many Neighbours in the Christian World; then they might have come at least to their Pulpits in their clean Holidays Clothes, (as we say)

say) then there might be Hopes of Conviction and Amendment. But oh, to be guilty of the dreadful Sin of Perjury, and yet defend it both by Law and Profession, doth cut down our Hopes of their Amendment! The *Conformists*, like *Eli's Sons*, come from the very Act unto their Pulpit; and, after their Engagement in the *Dragon's Quarrel against the Lamb*, and striking Hands to overthrow the Interest and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, they go immediately to preach him. But this is not all; in the very Pulpit they appear in their Sins and the Spots of their Uncleanness; for since they have submitted unto the *Prelate*, and are thereby ingrafted in him, every Day and Hour they live, without breaking of this Bond, they *perjure* themselves, and their *Conformity* is a *fresh continued Act of Perjury*, and so is not of the Nature of other Sins; but every Moment they live they sin; and their *Submission* is an everlasting, ever-running, uninterrupted *Stream of Perjury*. True indeed the *Act* of their *Submission* is *transient*, but the *Relation* is *permanent*; so that every Time the *Conformist* preaches, being a fresh drawing out of the Fountain he sware against, is a *Renewing* of his *Perjury*; and, when ye come to *hear him preach*, ye come to *hear him perjure himself*. And now, who can restrain himself? The *Conformist's* Ruling, Preaching and Baptizing, is his perjured Living and Breathing in the *Prelate*; and therefore are all polluted. And now, who can approach? Is it a Wonder we stand at a Distance from such *filthy* Creatures? Have they crucified the Lord Jesus, which is no complemental hyperbolick Speech, and shall such as love the Lord join with them? The Apostle saith, that *such as care not for their Families, are worse than an Infidel, and have denied the Faith*. How deep must *Conformists* Sin reach? Oh, all ye that profess the Lord Jesus, think seriously of this! Remember our Lord saith, *He that receiveth you, receiveth him that sent me*. Ye receive the *Conformists*



*mists* by *hearing* them, and therefore *receive* the *Prelate* that *sent* them; and whoever *receiveth* the *Prelate* that *sent* them, *receiveth* the *Devil* that *sent* him. Ye that ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, and chosen him above all, How shall ye shew your Love to him now? Will ye *muster* under the *Standard* of his *Enemies*? *Is this the Kindness* ye *shew* to your *Friend*? Have *Prelates* and *Curates* broken down the *Interests* of *Christ*, *persecuted* his *People*, *betrayed* the *Lord Jesus*, *set up* *Sin* and *Profanity*, and *opened* the *barred* *Doors* to *Antichrist*, and will ye yet *join* with them? Will ye *eat*, *drink* and *converse* with them? Oh, the great *Wrath* of the dreadful *God* against this *ungrateful*, *treacherous*, and *mocking* *Generation*! Verily, if there were such *Love* as there should be, the *Sight* of a *Prelate* and a *Curate* would be as the *Meeting* with and *Seeing* of a *Basilisk*. Is it possible to keep at too great a *Distance* from them? Profess what ye will, this general *Compliance* argues a *lukewarm* *Temper*, and a *deep* *Sleep*. But oh, ye might save the *Lord* a *Labour*! Now is the *Lord* trying his *Friends* their *Love*, *Respect* and *Zeal*, and how far they will go for him. Ye shall not every *Day* have *Occasion* thus to manifest your *Love*, and give *Proof* of your *Respects* to the *Lord Jesus*, and possibly he will never more trouble you. Hear the *Curates*, and give a *Testimony* for the *Lord*, if ye can. Be not rash in condemning such as have suffered on this *Account*, as guilty of *Self-Murder*: Fear lest their *Blood* testify against you. Oh! think ye have done too much already; recoil at last: Remember this is the last *Point* they want; they have got *Prelacy* established by *Law*; the *Officers* have either yielded, come unto them, or else left their *Charges*, and others are got in their *Rooms*; and now the only *Thing* they lack is *Hearing*; and hence they ply all their *Batteries* to this, for they know it concerns them. I tell you, the *Standing* or *Falling* of *Prelacy*

lies on this. Ye Watchmen of the Lord that have, by your leaving your Charges, given your Testimony against this Way, beware of establishing what ye have destroyed, by *serv*ing as *common* Soldiers, in that Army in which ye have *refused* to serve as *Officers*; but be doing; think not ye are free of your Employment, because the *Prelates* have discharged you; get up and be doing, else the *Lord with a foolish People will provoke you to Jealousy*. Ye that profess the Lord, and have indeed found the Arm of the Lord revealed to you, oh! know the Times, and be ye doing. I tell you your Compliance with *Curates* and *Prelates* goeth near the Lord's Heart, and will make sad Work of it one Day. Ye *great Ones*, what may be expected of you to do now for the Lord? Tell me not of a Difference of Persons, as tho' ye heard not all, but some only, seeing all are engaged in the Cause, and it is the *Quarrel we look to*. Tell me not of godly Men who hear; so there are that hear not. God is now calling to cease from Men, and to look up to our Maker, else God will break them. Tell me not of Ordination, and that yet they are not deposed; Contempt of Ordinances, which are Scare-Crows of Words to affright simple Children. Idolizing of Forms hath been an old Evil: There's no worshiping of God, but in the Spirit; God will not be mocked. As, therefore, ye would shew your Love and Regard to the Lord Jesus; as ye would not grieve the Hearts of the Godly; as ye would not strengthen or harden *Curates*, and establish *Prelacy*; or, as ye would have Peace when dying; as ye would wish the Lord to return, oh! separate from the Tents of these wicked Men, and fall to and seek to build the House of the Lord; else know that the Lord will shortly be amongst us, and your Carcases shall fall in this Wilderness, or else mourn and pine away, when others shall rejoice who have born a Part of the Burden.

But

But oh! what tender Heart cannot but mourn and lament, not only for the Profanity of *Curates* (for few expect better of them) but for the Lukewarmness, Ingratitude, Frothiness, Fruitlessness, Mocking and Compliance of those who are Sons and Daughters, at least, by Profession. I shall only say this; Oh! search and try your Ways, and amend ye every one his Doings, and look from whence ye have fallen, and do your first Works; or else know, that the Wrath of a jealous God will break out suddenly upon you, and that without Remedy; and Trees only bearing a few fair Flourishes, and that cumber the Ground, shall be rooted out and cast over the Hedge. For Things will not always continue thus; the abused long-suffering Patience of God will have an End. And then I doubt not but many that carry their Heads high will be found light. As *Isaac* said to *Jacob*, *Come hither, my Son, let me feel thee, if thou be my first-born or not*; so, I assure you, Christ will feel the best of you, and try what you are. Oh! then, prepare yourselves in Time. Now, may the Lord himself visit his poor afflicted Remnant, and give them Grace, Wisdom, Boldness and Patience, until the evil Days pass away. To him be Glory for ever. *Amen.*

*Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth Peace and Good-will towards Men.*

F I N I S.





